

# BANDWAGON

THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

NOVEMBER - DECEMBER 2003

**3 CIRCUSES IN 3 RINGS**



**1 HIPPODROME WITH 1/2 MILE TRACK**



**1 MUSEUM OF LIVING CURIOSITIES**



**2 MENAGERIES IN 2 TENTS**

**1 ELEVATED STAGE, SIZE 60-80 FT.**

**1 OLYMPIAN GAMES**

**8 UNITED MONSTER SHOWS**

**P.T. BARNUM'S GREATEST SHOW ON EARTH, & THE GREAT LONDON CIRCUS COMBINED WITH**



**THE LARGEST LIVING BEAST THE CHILDREN'S MUTE FRIEND, ON WHOSE BROAD BACK THE ROYAL CHILDREN AND PEOPLE OF ALL CLASSES HAVE RIDDEN, HIS FAME IS NOT LIMITED TO A CONTINENT, AND HE IS THE MOST UNIVERSAL FAVORITE ALIVE.**

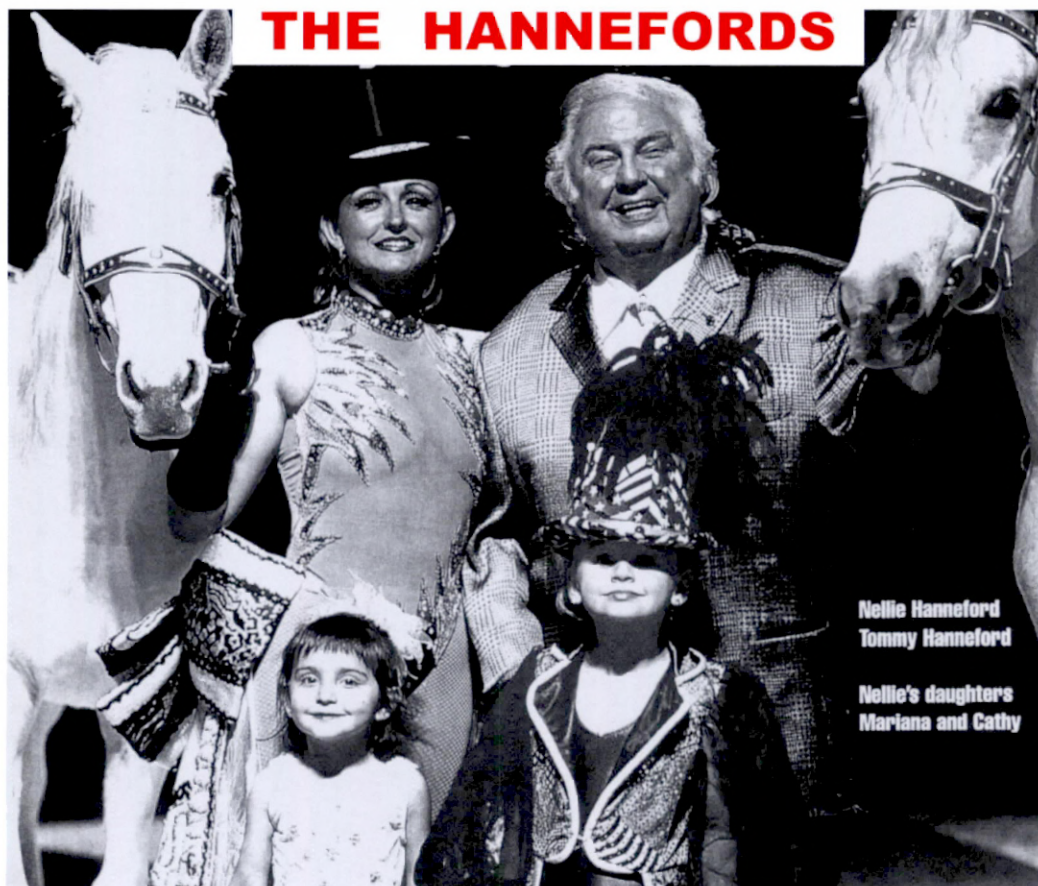
**ANGER'S ROYAL BRITISH MENAGERIE & GRAND INTERNATIONAL ALLIED SHOWS**

**BARNUM, BAILEY & HUTCHINSON. — SOLE OWNERS. —**

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## THE HANNEFORDS

Nellie Hanneford  
Tommy Hanneford

Nellie's daughters  
Mariana and Cathy

GREETING AND BEST WISHES FOR THE

*Holidays and  
the New Year*

TOMMY - STRUPPI - NELLIE



# HAPPY HOLIDAYS

From  
John and Brigitte  
Pugh  
And The  
Management,  
Cast and Staff.  
2003.



CLYDE  
BEATTY  
**COLE BROS.**  
WORLD'S LARGEST  
**CIRCUS**  
UNDER  
THE BIG TOP!



# Spec-ology Of The Circus

## PART ONE

By Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

The word "Spec-ology" was coined by A. Morton Smith as the title of an article published in the July 31, 1943 Billboard.

The Spectacle as a pantomime, pageant, tournament or grand entry is as old as the circus in America.

Next to circus parades, which are as extinct as the proverbial dodo, the grand entry or spectacle presented at the beginning of or during a circus performance is the most glamorous, eye-filling and impressive feature of the program.

From the time of Rickett's Circus in 1793, which is credited with being the first circus in America, all circuses have included in their performances a grand entry, a pantomime, a tournament, or some kind of a spec-

This 1865 Thayer & Noyes program listed the Jack the Giant Killer spec. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise credited.

tacular feature and the abbreviation "Spec" has become the common name for any pageant or spectacle presented in connection with a circus performance.

When George Washington was President, Philadelphia was the capital and Rickett's Circus was located there. Washington often attended this circus and was no doubt thrilled by the equestrian acts, as horseback riding was his favorite sport. The 1793 program included The Grand Historical Pantomime, which satirized the whiskey rebellion in western Pennsylvania. This was a spec that probably amused the "Father of our Country."

Over forty circuses from 1800 to 1875 presenting a spectacle of some kind have been identified. Some of them were:

In 1799 Ricketts presented Harlen's Pantomime, or The Ship Wreck.

Lailson Circus followed Ricketts in Philadelphia in 1797 and presented La Belle Dorothe or Maternal Affection.

The West & Co. Circus in 1817 presented Flora's Birthday.

In 1845 Rockwell & Stone presented The Holiday Sports of Spain.

In 1847 Sands & Nathan's spec was Jack and the Bean Stock.

Spalding & Rogers' spec in 1849 was George Washington or Old Put and Anthony Wayne.

The Robinson & Elder Circus pagant in 1851 was called Cinderella. It lasted one hour.

In 1852 Spalding and Rogers' Roman Amphitheatre presented Mother Goose and Her Golden Egg. D. W. Stone played the part of Squire Bugle and Bill Lake was Beadle Graball. There were nine additional principal cast members.

In 1853 Seth B. Howes brought

Franconi's Hippodrome to America and presented Scipo's Triumphal Return to Rome, after the Conquest of Carthage. The processional featured a band chariot drawn by a ten horse hitch, an equestrian corps of mounted men and women in costume, elephants, camels, deer, ponies, ostriches in a grand march on the hippodrome track.

Howes later presented The Field of the Cloth of Gold as its opening number.

In 1857 Sands, Nathans & Co. presented Mazeppa or the Wild Horse of Tartary.

L. B. Lent's 1860 spec was titled Jack the Giant Killer.

Around 1860 Gardner & Hemmings Amphitheatre offered a grand pantomime called Jack the Giant

This c-1860 Gardner & Hemming's hand bill listed Jack the Giant Killer.

### ACADEMY OF MUSIC!

SPALDING & HEDWELL PROPRIETORS AND MANAGERS

PROGRAMME:  
SUNDAY NIGHT..... DECEMBER 17th, 1865.

### THAYER & NOYES' GREAT EQUESTRIAN TROUPE

MR. C. W. NOYES.....EQUESTRIAN MANAGER  
MR. S. P. STICKNEY.....MASTER OF CIRCLE  
DR. J. L. THAYER.....JESTER AND BUSINESS MANAGER  
Messrs. JAS. C. REYNOLDS and ARCHIE CAMPBELL.....CLOWNS

1. GRAND ENTRY, Star and Walts.....FULL TROUPE
2. LES HOMMES D'LAIR.....MIACO BROTHERS
3. PRINCIPAL ACT.....Miss EMMA STICKNEY CLOWN.....Dr. J. L. THAYER
4. SCHOOL OF INSTINCT.....THE WONDERFUL HORSE, ALI PACHA, Introduced by his trainer, Mr. S. P. STICKNEY.
5. CHAIR LA PERCHA.....Messrs. KING and MIACO.
6. CHAMPION HORSEMANSHIP.....Mr. ROBERT STICKNEY

#### INTERMISSION OF TEN MINUTES

7. GYMNASIUM STRIFE, led by the Champion of the Old and New World, Messrs. JAMES COOKE and G. M. KELLEY
8. SENSATIONAL EQUITATION, without Saddle or Bridle.....Mr. J. ROBINSON
9. POSTURING.....ALFRED MIACO
10. SCHOOL OF INSTINCT.....THE TRAINED MONKEY SIG. VICTOR Introduced by Mr. C. W. NOYES.
11. PRINCIPAL ACT.....Madame CARLOTTA De REEG
12. JACK, the GIANT KILLER.....COMPANY

NOTE: The audience is respectfully notified by the Management that no Acts or Ranges act on the Programme will be given.

Florida Refreshment Saloon (next door to the Academy—here left), all kinds of Refreshments can be obtained with dispatch, and at moderate prices.

PERFORMANCES EVERY WEDNESDAY AND SATURDAY NOON.

### GARDNER & HEMMING'S AMPHITHEATRE

Market Street, above Twelfth.

### HAPPY NEW YEAR!



COME ONE!

COME ALL!

Great Success of the Grand Pantomime called

### JACK THE GIANT KILLER AND DON JUAN!

Which are received nightly with Shouts of Laughter and Peals of Applause. They will be repeated every evening during

### NEW YEAR WEEK

First Appearance of Mr. JAMES DE MOTT  
The Celebrated Equestrian. All the Company and the Beautiful Stud of Horses will appear.

New Year's Day, 3 Grand Performances

Morning, at 10; Afternoon, at 2; Evening, at half-past 6.

COME EARLY AND GET GOOD SEATS.

U. S. Job Print, Ledger Buildings.



Killer and Don Juan.

Dan Rice's Circus presented Ward's Mission to China in 1861.

The 1863 Dan Rice Spec was titled The Raid on Union Picket Line.

In 1864 Robinson & Howes Circus presented The Field of the Cloth of Gold.

Thayer & Noyes' Great Equestrian Troupe presented Jack, the Giant Killer in 1865.

Maginley's Royal Circus presented Putman the Iron Son of '72. in 1874.

The John H. Murray spec in 1874 was Dick Turpin's Ride to York.

The John Murray Circus featured the Battle of Bosworth Field in 1876.

In 1875 the Barnum spec was titled Blue Beard. In 1876 it was called Oriental Cavalcade.

The Great London show spec in 1877 was called Mardi Gras.

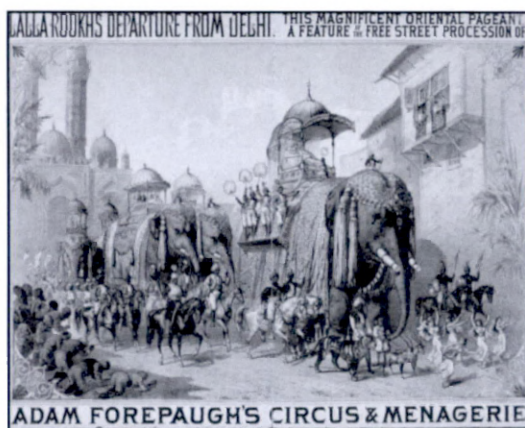
In 1879 Pullman & Co.'s spec was called Humpty Dumpty.

In 1880 the Pullman & Hamilton spec was titled Humpty Dumpty.

Early American circuses were small one-ring shows and the performances consisted mainly of equestrian acts, trick and fancy riding and drill formations. Acrobats, wire walkers and talking and singing clowns soon began to appear on the program. But there was always some kind of a pantomime, tournament, or dramatic feature that was a forerunner of the spec. Then as in the mid-1940s and 1950s the so-called spec became just a walk-a-round of the performers and animals.

As circuses grew larger with their horse and wagon caravans, the transportation of necessary baggage and equipment was trouble enough without adding to it by carrying scenery for pantomimes, so they were replaced by the Grand Entry in which all the performers and lead animals rode in and around the ring as an introduction to the performance.

The Grand Entry developed into the Tournament, which larger circuses of later years presented and augmented with musical and dramatic episodes. The tournament is a processional type of spec presented on the hippodrome track and often extends into the circus rings where



Adam Forepaugh 1881 lithograph of Lalla Rookh parade and spec Cincinnati Art Museum.

tableaux and dramatic scenes are enacted. Most of the specs presented by circuses since 1920 have been of this type.

Themes for spectacles have been taken from the Bible, fairy tales, mythology, history and other sources. From 1850 to 1880 the following titles were used for specs presented by leading circuses; Jack, the Giant Killer, Cinderella, St. George and the Dragon, Cinderella, Putnam, or Days of '76, Hun, the Hunter, The Miser of Bagdad, Mazeppa, Congress of Nations, and Custer's Last Charge.

Michael Means provided these spec descriptions, "The basic message of these processions is, of course, the marvelous nature of this particular circus and its performance—their ability to translate us out of our quotidian lives into a world of imagination, danger, and beauty. But on top of that seductive premise and promise there were often thematic displays. Commonly, the 'official' purpose of this procession is to stir feelings of patriotism, childlike wonder, religious awe, or historical heroism—in other words, to lead us into experiencing possibilities that transcend what we live and know.

"In the early twentieth century, big circus spectacles were considerably more than that. They incorporated traditional display and theme into 20 to 30 miniature plays in dumb-show (pantomime) that blended theatrical elements of plot, acting, sets, costumes, and music into an almost mind-numbing experience of the story . . . to produce that sense, every

element of the circus was employed. Roustabouts, animal grooms, and cook house crews swelled the rank of the ballet dancers, equestrians and equestriennes, strong men, clowns, and all the other performers to create a story in sensory overload.

"To accommodate all these performers and their functions, a large section of the backside reserve seats was blocked off by a backdrop (or stage) appropriate to the subject. The opening procession led the performers from their entrance, around the hippodrome track, to whatever places were assigned them before the backdrop or in the three performing rings."

One of the Ringling brothers in a letter detailed the size of the stage, "Regarding the height of scenery will say it can be 16 feet as we will use a 13 foot side wall and behind the scenery, we can use a 4 foot side pole which will work all right. The full length of scenery make 150 feet, but arranged so we can use it shorter if necessary, where our show grounds make it necessary to leave out a section of the big canvas. The wagon will hold sections 18 feet long."

The Golden Age of the massive circus spectacles began with the 1881 Adam Forepaugh show presenting a larger and more spectacular pageant than had ever before been seen by American circus goers. It was titled Lalla Rookh and the Departure from Delhi. It featured Louise Montague, who was paid \$75 a week.

From 1887 to 1891 Forepaugh's spec was titled Custer's Last Battle.

In 1892 J. T. McCaddon, manager of the Forepaugh show, hired John Rettig, a Cincinnati, Ohio artist, to produce the historical Bible spectacle the Fall of Ninevah. It was presented in five tableaux.

The Forepaugh show presented The American Revolution and the Scenes and Battles of 1776 in 1893. William Gillette directed this mammoth production. Scene one depicted Paul Revere's Ride and the alarm that started the war. Scene two was in Concord and depicted "the shot that was heard around the world." Scene three was at Bunker Hill. The British charge and they are repulsed,



they charged again and a third time when the American's ammunition was gone. After desperate fighting it was a masterly retreat for the Colonists. The fourth scene was the signing of the declaration of independence. Scene five took place at Bowling Green in New York City. Scene six depicted Washington crossing the Delaware and the struggle with ice, the battle of Monmouth with the arrival of Washington was depicted in scene seven. Scene eight showed the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and the British army at Yorktown. The final scene was the inauguration of General Washington as the first president.

There were nineteen principal characters; fifteen Colonial heroes; thirteen British officers; seven signers of the Declaration of Independence.

This production required eleven property men, thirteen scenery men and three calcium light operators according to show publicity. However, Dick Conover stated, "Although programmed for nine scenes, all of the action took place in the center arena, required no elaborate scenery, comparatively few supernumeraries, and no ballet girls. In general, it as much less pretentious than the Nineveh spec of 1892."

James A. Bailey hired Imre Kiralfy, a world-renowned showman, in 1889 to stage a massive production using pantomimic performances with special music, a corps of ballet girls and the use a large numbers of animals. The spec in 1890 was titled *Nero* or the Destruction of Rome. It was first presented during the 1889-1890 London winter season after which it toured America with Barnum and Bailey in 1890 and 1891.

Imre Kiralfy (1845-1919) and his brother Bolossy (1847-1932) were born in Budapest, Hungary of Jewish parents. Imre soon gained an international reputation as one of the most prolific impresarios, organizers and producers of numerous imperial spectacles most, though not all, were held in London.

The English *Strand* magazine in 1909 contained "My Reminiscences" by Kiralfy. There he said, "After my initial success in Brussels came a



Cover of a Barnum & Bailey 1890 booklet featuring *Nero*.

calm. I found no chance in Europe to repeat my triumph, and so resolved to immigrate to America. One day in 1869, I landed in New York. I saw instantly that the great popular want in America was spectacle, spectacle that was more or less familiar to Europeans."

On February 1877 the Kiralfy brothers opened *Around the World in 80 Days* at Niblo's Garden Theater in New York. Near the end of the 1880s Imre Kiralfy was producing much larger historical spectacles.

Kiralfy continued, "Those were the days of P. T. Barnum, the famous American showman. Although he was an old man, I suppose he thought I was beginning to invade his own particular domain. At all events, he saw "*Nero*." And offered me a great sum to be allowed to produce it in connection with his own show in London. I was just then starting for London, so he commissioned me to examine Olympia and tell him whether or not it would be suitable for "*Nero*." I told him it would, so he had "*Nero*," rewritten and produced on a smaller scale but

Londoners saw a more artistic scale. The Barnum engagement in London opened on November 11 [1889] at Olympia, and lasted until February 13."

Angelo Venanzi composed special music. Wilhelm of London designed costumes. Messrs. Robecchi, Butell and Valton in Paris painted the scenery. Beniamino Lombardi directed the choruses.

Advertisements described it as "A Titanic, Imperial, Historical Spectacle of Colossal Dramatic Realism Gladiatorial Combats and Olympian Displays. Indisputably, Immeasurably, Overwhelmingly the Most Majestic, Entrancing, and Surpassingly Splendid and Realistic Spectacle of Any Age."

Almost the full length of the backside of the tent was used for the stage and scenery. The panoramic background represented the city of Rome, with towering, triumphal arches. Several hundred performers participated, including 200 dancers, singers, and ballet girls, who traveled with the show and did nothing else except to perform in the spec.

"*Nero*" used singing as well as pantomime. The chorus included seventeen sopranos, seven contraltos, seventeen tenors, five baritones and eight basses. The corps de ballet was 118 in number.

The first tableau was titled "Outside the Gates of Ancient Rome."

The second tableau was "An Imperial Fete Day in Rome."

Then began *Nero's* Triumphal Precession, that included exciting elephant races, two-horse chariot races, four horse chariot races contest between the winners in two previous races, thrilling two-horse standing race and gladiatorial contests.

The third tableau was *The Circus Maximus*.

The fourth tableau was the exterior of *Nero's* palace by moonlight.

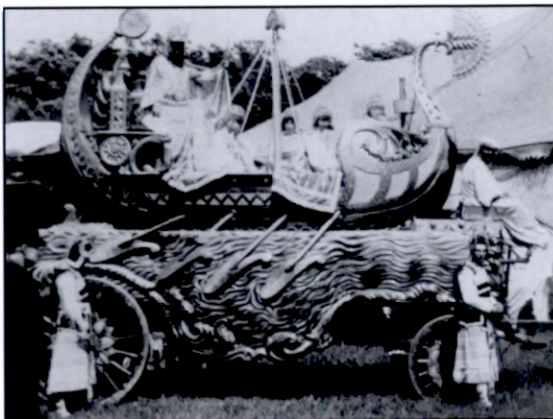
The fifth tableau was the interior of *Nero's* palace. Next came festal dances in the light of burning Rome, the slaughter of Christian's martyrs and the death of *Nero* and the triumph of Galba.

The 1890 Barnum & Bailey season opened April 12 under canvas at 110th Street and Fifth Avenue in









The Phoenician Galley in the 1903 Barnum spec.

When the Greatest Show on Earth opened at the Olympia in London, England on December 27, 1897 the circus featured The Mahdi or For the Victoria Cross. The pageant as produced by Bennett Burleigh. Scene one took place in Eastern Sudan on the banks of the Upper Nile. Scene two transpired near Haundoub in the Sudan. Scene three revealed a fortified native African village on the eastern banks of the Nile.

The cast included Scouts, Hussars, 10th Bengal Lancers, Marines, Gorkhas, Black Watch Highlanders, Artillery, Punjab Madios, Bombay and Egyptian Infantry, Sudanese, British Foot Guards, Blue jackets, with cannon and machine guns, Egyptian Cavalry, Black Mahdist Rifleman and Mahdist Camel Patrol.

The Barnum show spec in 1899 was Chinese Gordon's Advance, Capture in the Sudan.

While the Barnum show was playing in France in 1902 the show presented Le Voyage de Balkis, produced Bolossy Kiralfy, brother of Imre. This was actually a King

The Queen of Balkis float in 1903.



Solomon theme (the Queen of Sheba was named Balkis). In anticipation of presenting the same spec in America in 1903 the title was changed after the long burnout of Solomon on the John Robinson Circus. In 1903 the Barnum spectacle was titled A Tribute of Balkis.

In 1904 and 1905 The Durbar at Delhi

was the Barnum & Bailey spec. Bolossy Kiralfy produced it too.

Peace, America's Immortal Triumph was the Barnum & Bailey spec in 1906 and 1907. It was again a Bolossy Kiralfy production. The first part took place in Manchuria following the armistice between Russian and Japan. Theodore Roosevelt, President of the United States stepped in and after many days of negotiation both sides agreed upon an honorable peace at Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

The second part was a Pageant of Nations. There was unit of the U. S. Cavalry, a float with peace loving Columbia impersonated by a young American girl; a detachment of the U. S. infantry, Russian Cossacks, Japanese, German, Italian French horse and foot soldiers, and a group of English regulars with an East Indian contingent riding on canopied war elephants. A young women who rode on a mammoth float drawn by six white horses, glittering with gold and jewels, symbolized the Goddess of Peace. Other floats carried costumed trumpeters, vestal maidens, and flower girls.

In 1908, 1909, 1910 and 1911 the Barnum show reverted to a proces-



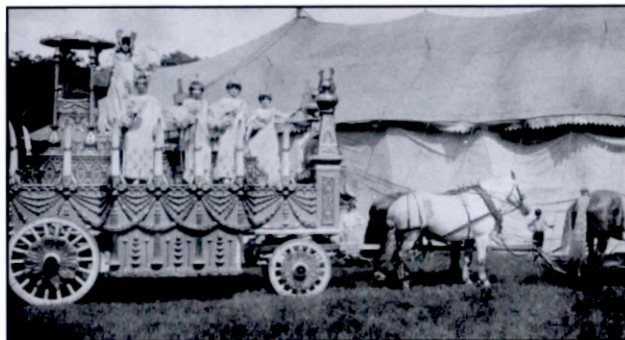
The program for the Barnum & Bailey Olympia stand in London.

sional presentation called The Grand Tournament. The program said, "It was intended simply as a pleasing, picturesque tournament introduction of the feast of arenic features to follow, and yet embodying the rare and radiant elements of a sumptuously spectacular entertainment."

Using wardrobe from past pageants Egyptians, Philistines, Phoenicians, Siberians, Africans, Arabians and Abyssinians were included in the march.

In 1912 and 1913 the Barnum show produced the major pageant

The Barnum & Bailey Cleopatra float in 1903.







Cleopatra was the 1912 Barnum & Bailey spec.

May Cleopatra. An article in the 1912 *Theatre* magazine told of the rehearsing of the spectacle. "Mr. Alf T. Ringling, with scenario in his hand, is rehearsing a Roman mob, consisting of an army drafted from Bowery lodging houses, for the opening scene in the new great spectacle Cleopatra, on the huge double stage, built to hold 1,250 persons, 650 horses, a ballet of 300, a chorus of 300, 50 electricians, 50 stage hands and 10 property men (these numbers were highly exaggerated).

"Unable to secure a new 'thriller' for the circus this year, the ever alert Ringling brothers have started out to out do Professor Max Reinhardt in the production of wordless play. Cleopatra has a spoken 'starter-off.' And, it is not easy to drill an actor to say his lines so that they will 'get

Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp was the 1917 Barnum show feature. Cincinnati Art Museum.



they could get them over the three rings.

"Trumpets sound in a dozen directions. The great armies of Rome appear in mighty phalanxes, banners flying, chariots rumbling and the armor glistening in the sun—a triumph in circus stage lighting. This procession takes the place of the old-fashioned tournament, which always used to open the circus performance.

"During all this time, over to one side of the mammoth stage door the Cleopatra spectacle 'Bud' Gorman was busy rehearsing the stage hands, property men and electricians in getting ready the wonderful stage devices for reproducing sandstorms on the desert—for even 'The Garden of Allah' hasn't got anything on the circus this year—earthquakes, mirages, falling temples, fires and volcanoes.

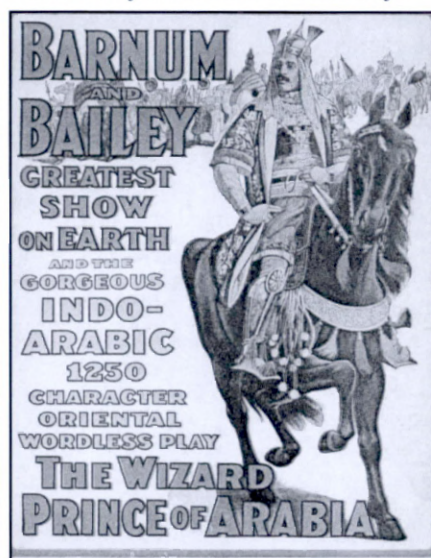
"And up in the balcony the circus band, looking incongruous enough in civilian dress, with derby hats, fedora hats and every other style of headgear, were being rehearsed in the score of the spectacle by Faltis Effendi, the late bandmaster of the Khedive of Egypt, who was especially engaged to arrange the score and write the incidental music. And up stairs in the concert room of the Garden, Ottokar Bar-

over' in the big top or Madison Square Garden. It took Mr. Ringling all afternoon to get the woman playing Cleopatra and the man playing Marc Anthony to say their combined three lines so that

tik, of the Metropolitan Grand Opera Company, as ballet master, was rehearsing three hundred girls in a great ballet of Ancient Egypt.

"The arena itself being cleared of the other acts, the elephants now come in for rehearsal."

The program stated that the spectacle was produce under the personal direction of William E. Gorman. Scene one took place in Alexandria, Egypt, with the rise of the curtain showing the streets of the city at day-break. Cleopatra, surrounded by the attendants of her court, appears on the temple terrace and demands to know why Rome invades her city.



The 1914 Barnum & Bailey spec was The Wizard Prince of Arabia. Cincinnati Art Museum.

The last act depicts a festal scene in the court of Cleopatra. Caesar, incensed by rage conduct of Anthony, has advanced with his army on Alexandria. A courier brings Anthony news that the city is surrounded. Anthony goes forth to fight his own countrymen—for Cleopatra and for Egypt.

Festivities are at their height when it is learned that Anthony has been wounded to the death. Anthony is laid on a carpeted platform. Cleopatra rushes to his side and he dies in her arms. From basket of snakes she snatches an asp and holds it to her bosom. After its fatal sting she falls dead over the body of Anthony.

On March 30, 1914 Barnum and Bailey filed an application for copy-



right of *The Wizard Prince of Arabia*. Barnum and Bailey, a co-partnership, composed of Al Ringling, Alf T. Ringling, Charles Ringling, John Ringling and Henry Ringling, claimed the copyright. Part of the filing read: The title of said work and compositions and pictorial illustrations was represented by a wordless play in one act and constitutes a spectacle or exhibition for which an admission fee is charged by said Barnum and Bailey; that is connected with said exhibition, said book filed herein was published on the 21st day of March 1914, by being placed on sale, sold and published and distributed generally throughout the United States, and particularly. And in the vicinity of New York City, New York.

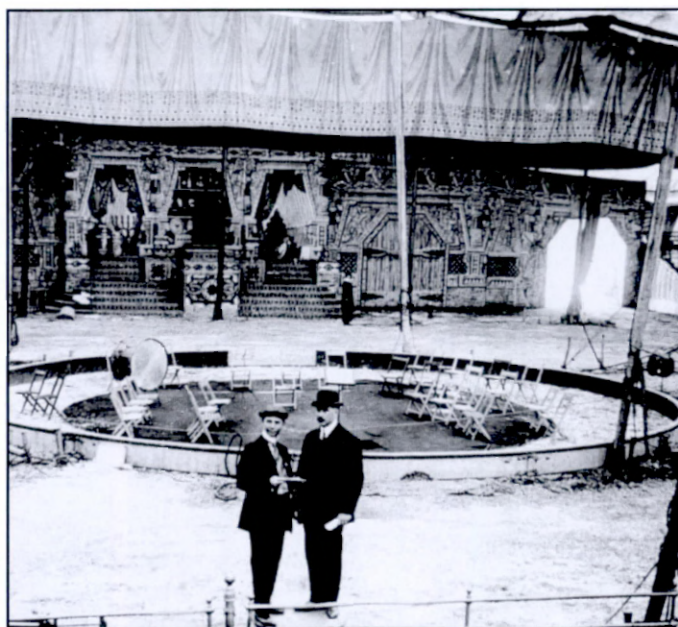
"The author of said work, dramatic and musical composition and illustrations and the whole thereof, is Alf T. Ringling, one of the members of said co-partnership of Barnum and Bailey, a resident of the United States, whose address is 221 Institute Place, Chicago, Illinois."

In 1914 the new spectacle was *The Wizard Prince of Arabia*. Alfred T. Ringling produced it. Fred Bradna was stage director.

The cast included seven East Indian characters with five Indian magicians and seven Arabian characters with five Arabian Wizards.

The production was a wordless play in one act and one scene, representing the marriage of Abdullah, Prince of Arabia, to Ahloo Saran, Princess of India, daughter of King Babar. Included in the pageant were East Indian ladies of the court, soldiers, jesters, fakirs, tribes of wild people and dancing girls. The Arabians were represented by generals, women of the harem, tribal chiefs, soldiers, horsemen, spearmen, elephants, camels, horses and riders.

The Barnum & Bailey 1915 pageant was *Lalla*



A front view of the stage on Ringling Bros. around 1916.

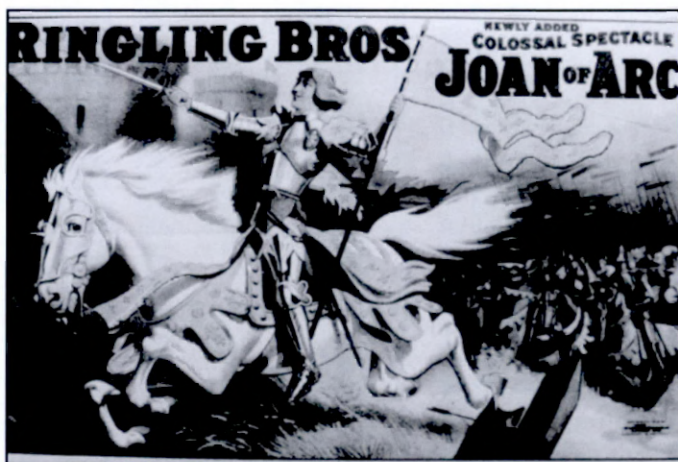
*Rookh, The Departure from Delhi.*

The Barnum show presented *Persia or the Thousand and One Nights* in 1916.

In 1917 and 1918 Barnum & Bailey's spec was *Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp*, described as a magnificent Chinese pageant. The program said the gorgeous costumes and accessories were all made in China.

The April 8, 1917 *New York Times Magazine* published an article titled "What it costs in Money and Effort to Devise a Circus Spectacle." It was an interview with Alfred T. Ringling.

A 1912 Ringling poster featuring *Joan of Arc*. Cincinnati Art Museum.



It read in part, "How do I pick the themes?"

"The first essential is a simple, striking story that can be intelligibly told by a spectacle, the and the second essential is that the story must permit a lavish display of color in the way of costumes and trappings and properties.

"Take for instance, *The Wizard Prince of Arabia*, the spectacle we produced three years ago, it was founded on a Hindu saga. The costumes were those of the *Arabian Nights*, and the story was a simple one of mystery and magic. There was a Prince, and of course, a

Princess to be rescued, and a man of great strength whose feats included pulling up trees by the roots, and a bird of phantasy that flew over the heads of the audience, and that was shot by a single marksman.

"*Cleopatra* was a spectacle of a different cast. We left fairyland and went into history. But the prime essentials were the same--a simple story and color. The scene was laid at the time of Anthony's arrival at Alexandria. The decadence of Egypt meant lavish display of its Court life. So in selecting this period for a spectacle we had all the gorgeousness of the Orient contrasted with the soldiery of Rome and the Egyptian populace of the visitors from the adjacent deserts.

"This year, with our pageant of 'Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp,' we have gone back to the land of the 'Arabian Nights.'

"As Mr. Ringling described the opportunities of 'spec stuff' presented by the story of *Aladdin*, as he mentioned various fairy stories and legendary incidents and discussed their relative 'spec' qualities and discussed their relative qualities, his face wore the happy smile of a boy--a sort of super-boy--who



can let his fancy wander into the long ago, who can get a thousand people to 'make believe' for him, who has a generous Noah's Ark filled with real animals upon which he can make draft, who can spend a hundred thousand dollars for costumes and scenery and other things that will make his fancy a real, live, viable thing.

"Having selected the theme for a spectacle and the other Ringling brothers having given it their approval. 'Mr. Alf T.,' as he is known within the circus, began writing the scenario. This will run about 6,000 words. 'I try to visualize the story,' Mr. Ringling explains, as it can be told in the arena. I try to translate it, so to speak, into 'spec' language, eliminating the incidents that cannot be told to the topmost row of spectators by pantomime, and emphasizing those that are most eloquent.'

"The working basis of a spectacle is 1,999 people, 100 to 150 horses, 10 to 23 elephants, about as many camels, sacred cows, zebras and other exotic animals as needed and about thirty minutes by the clock. When the spectacle is given in Madison Square Garden a couple of hundred 'supers' are hired; but when the show goes on the road under canvas the Barnum & Bailey army is recruited up to full marching strength by the addition of its corps of canvasmen and cook house men, every actor is in the spectacle

After the theme has been decided "on a scenic artist is called into conference. As soon as he gets the conception he makes what is known as a 'dummy stage.' Mr. Ringling uses this as a guide upon which to visualize the movements of the various groups that are to make up the final spectacle. And the artist begins his task of painting the scenery, and the magnitude of this task is indicated by the fact that the breadth of his scene is about five times that of an ordinary stage.

"Because of the difficulty of setting the scene up in a satisfactory manner under the big top, a new plan has been used this year for the pageant of 'Aladdin and his Wonderful Lamp.' Five mammoth umbrellas gaudy as tropic dawns—



A two sheet Joan of Arc poster used in 1912. Cincinnati Art Museum.

are let down from the ceiling and act as canopies for the main incidents of the pageant.

"The 'stage dummy' completed, the next thing in order is the cast of characters—a tidy little job when your cast includes 1,000 characters. But every one of them, down to the

A Joan of Arc illustration from a 1912 Ringling courier.



most obscure spear-carrier, must be enumerated with mathematical exactness, for a costume must be designed for him, and also it must be planned how he is to be got in, around and out of the arena on schedule time.

"The next collaborator is the costume artist. He is given a list of the characters a number of accurate costume plates and a free license for high-speed pigmental activity.

"But there is nothing fanciful about the money that it costs materialize the conception of the costume artist into real clothes that can be worn by real men and women. The figure jumps high into the thousands, Aladdin, for instance, was a Chinese boy, and so to give the real atmosphere of old China to this year's spectacle of 'Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp,' the costume plates were sent to China and the clothes were all made in Chinese sweat-shops or what ever it takes place of sweat-shops in the Flowery Kingdom.

"When all this has been accomplished the big spectacle is at last ready for rehearsal. About twenty-five copies of the working scenario are distributed. Here are a few of the men who get one. The bandleader, the equestrian director, the captain of the supers, the boss elephant man, the superintendent of the wardrobe, the mistress of the wardrobe, the master of trappings. The enumeration of those few is sufficient to indicate the number and the variety of the cogs in the circus machine, each and every one of which must do its appointed part of its appointed time, in order that the public may feast on the 'climax of all gorgeousness.' For back of and animating all that glitter and color and dash and romance are efficiency and system, inexorable omnipresent."

In the interview Mr. Ringling said nothing about the rehashing of costumes and props from earlier specs that were in storage in Bridgeport and Baraboo.

In the early 1890s Buffalo Bill presented a Grand Processional Review as an introduction of cowboys, Mexicans, Cossacks, Gau-



chos, Arabs and Army units from many countries.

The Cody show presented Custer's Last Stand in 1898. In 1900 a larger pageant was introduced for the first time, titled the Charge Up San Juan Hill. In 1901 and 1902 the spec was called The Battle of Tien Tsin, presented in two scenes. In England in 1903 the spec was titled The Battle of San Juan Hill. When the show returned to America in 1907 the Battle of Summit Springs was presented. This pageant was continued through the 1911 season. In 1912 and 1913 the spectacle was titled The Pyramids, Past and Present. The Buffalo Bill and 101 Ranch Wild West presented Preparedness in 1916.

In 1891 and 1892 Ringling Bros. presented Caesar's Triumphal Entry to Rome. This historical pageant was presented in three rings and one elevated stages and on the hippodrome track. It included marching warriors, gladiators, steel-clan knights, mounted cavaliers, helmeted spearmen, wandering Jews and Bedouin of the desert.

In 1899 the spec was called The Last Days of the Century, or the Light of Liberty.

The Ringling Bros. spec in 1901 and 1902 was the Grand Fetes of Ancient Rome. It was a panorama of regal magnificence, completely filling all rings, stages and on the hippodrome track.

In 1903 the Ringlings hired John Rettig to produce a major introductory spectacle titled Jerusalem and the Crusades. It was under the direction of Albert Ringling. Following the Ringling show's two-year cycle of specs it was there again in 1904.

The production had seventeen characters. Part one took place in Auvergue, France in 1099 with a gathering of the Knights of the Crusades. The tournament presented the Knights in battle on horseback with sword and shield. The departure of the crusaders ended part one.

Between part one and part two was the meeting of Emperor Alexis and the leaders of the crusade near

Constantinople and the garland ride by twenty-four Knights.

Part two was in Jerusalem, in the courtyard of the Emir's palace. A grand oriental procession of Mussalmans, Saracensm Turks and Egyptians took place that included dancing girls.



Al Miaco as Solomon in chariot on Ringling Bros.

Scene three was the battle on the ramparts of Jerusalem. In 1905 and 1906 Albert Ringling produced The Field of the Cloth of Gold. It took place on the border of France, in the Valley of Ardres in June 1520. The cast of characters included Henry VIII, Catherine, Queen of England and four other representing England. Francis I, King of France, Claude, Queen of France and four others represented France. Part one opened with a gathering of people from France and England to witness the consummation of a treaty between the sovereigns. The scene ended with a magnificent procession of combined Nobility, Knights, Nobles, Ecclesiastics, solders, of the English and French.

Part two was the festive celebration of the establishing of cordial relations between the people of the two countries. The Kings, Queens and Nobility were then entertained by a series of elaborate exhibitions, introducing dancing on horseback, followed by a grand ballet.

The 1907 Ringling program listed the spec as A Magnificent Spectacular Introductory Tournament, illustrating the wonderful enterprise of Ringling Bros.' World's Greatest Shows. A panoramic review of scenes and incidents of the Days of Rome in the zenith of its great opu-

lence, correctly costumed rulers, clericals, heroes and literati of this history making epoch. The same spec was presented in 1908.

In 1909, 1910 and 1911 the procession was titled The Pomp and Splendor of Ancient Egyptians. It included a Garland Entry, an equine ballet and a company of seventy-three skilled riders.

Looking forward to the 1912 spec John Ringling wrote to brother Al on January 27, 1912, "When the spectacle Joan of Arc was done at the Hippodrome in Paris it was the biggest success of any spectacle ever produced in that city. It packed the Hippodrome for a year and a half.

"One feature of this spectacle amounted to a sensation and was the talk of Paris; in the spectacle they burned Joan of Arc, and as the smoke and flames came up around Joan, she made her getaway into the bottom of the funeral pyre, and in her place was a very finely gotten up dummy, dressed just like Joan of Arc, and two angels came down from the top of the building on a wire a la Grigoletti, and ascended into the top of the building bearing Joan of Arc.

"This could easily be done at the Coliseum in Chicago and would be a great effect. You could have sky borders along the roof, and I am sure it would be a great dramatic effect. It would be a very simple matter to rig up the apparatus for hoisting the angels."

Al Ringling replied on February 1, 1912, "Yes, I believe that the burning of Joan the way you say would be well as far as the flash and spectacular work is concerned, but we all thought to keep away from that part of this; finishing the spec with the coronation of King Charles. I doubt whether the burning scene would take so well with a big majority of our patrons. It might perhaps be looked on to as a sacrilegious [sic].

John replied on March 4, 1912, "Regarding the burning of Joan of Arc, I think you will make a big mistake if you don't put this on. It certainly will make a big hit and it will create a lot of talk. No one could look



upon this as sacrilegious—in fact, it will be considered quite the opposite.”

One of the brothers wrote John on March 12, “Al says that we will try to work this ascension if we can. Of course you know that our drop curtain at the Coliseum comes out to the edge of the balcony, and we would have to work this from a position in front of the drop curtain as we cannot draw her up thought the balcony floor. However, I believe this can be worked out all right and shall try to assist Al in getting away with it, which he seems agreeable to.”

Albert Ringling produced a full-blown stage pageant in 1912 and 1913 called Joan of Ark and the Coronation of King Charles VII. There were 223 characters in the cast that featured Joan of Arc and Charles VII, King of France. There were fifty dancing girls in the ballet.

Part one opened with Joan’s meeting with the king at Chinon on March 8, 1429. The King presented her with sword and armor and the rejoicing of the populace began. The triumphal march from Chinon to Rheims introduced the French Quadrille on horseback.

Part two began with the coronation of Charles VII in the cathedral in Rheims on July 17, 1492. At the conclusion of the ceremony the French ballet was introduced.

Part three was the tableau of Joan at the cross.

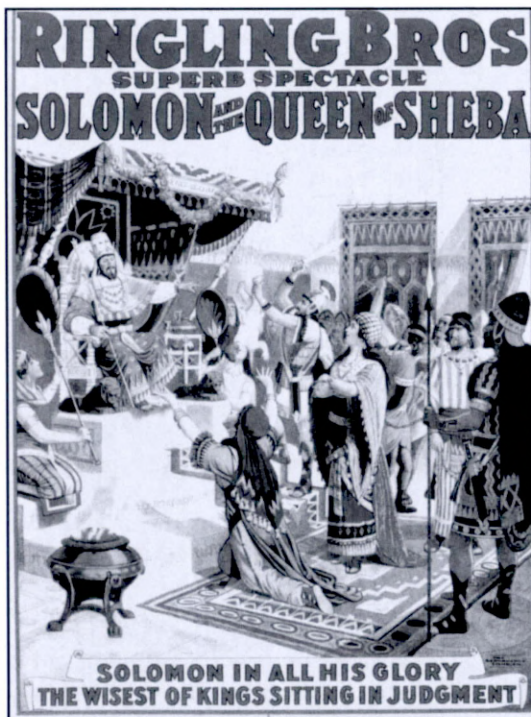
By late summer of 1913 the Ringling brothers began thinking about a spectacle for 1914. In an August 14, 1913 letter to John, Charles wrote regarding the spectacle: “I think we should have it next year. I believe it us a necessity, but would do as you say—have one scene only, one change of costumes only and a ballet of fifty instead of sixty, I would open same with a fan fare of twenty trumpeters, the musicians in the band and tournament followed by an assembly and ballet. And confine the slow pantomime to the least possible. I would put it away up high so that everybody can see it. Our spectacle this year is not put up high enough and the people on the backside of the blues cannot see it. It will be easy to arrange a

spectacle of this kind and it will advertise well as before and give better satisfaction.”

It was decided to produce Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. On November 13th John wired Al saying, “Think Solomon good subject unless [John] Robinson having used it for fifteen years poorly produced might have a bad effect. [James A.] Bailey produced it in London and I think we have lots of the costume plates (drawings of costumes) and some armor and properties in Bridgeport, which would be useful. I have been investigating Lalla Rookh for Barnum show and Alf seems to like it.”

On November 17 Al wrote Al Miaco, “We have about concluded to put on the spectacle ‘Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.’ Remembering that you were in this same spectacle for quite a number of years I thought perhaps you could give me some idea of how you did the spectacle. Will you please let me know anything you can about this production? How did the spectacle open up? What was the first that thy done in this spectacle? If you will kindly write me the way the plot of this ran I would appreciate same very much, and will more

Two sheet poster for Solomon and the Queen of Sheba.



than appreciate it if you will let me hear from you as soon as possible what you know of this spectacle.”

On November 20th Al Ringling wrote John Rettig, who had produced Solomon for the John Robinson Circus saying, “I was thinking that we could perhaps arrange with you to assist us in putting on a spectacle for the coming season; one that you have put on in previous years. It is an old spectacle and has been worked quite strong, but we think the subject is good and has considerable drawing power. Would you care to work with me in putting on this spectacle? If so and you would care to let me know your conditions would be glad to have you do so. Or if you wish you could run up here to Baraboo and we could talk the matter over. If we should not come to terms we would pay the transportation of yourself both coming and going. Would like to know in advance just when you would come so I would be sure to be at home on your arrival here.”

Charles wrote Al on November 23rd saying, “I believe it will be a good idea to have Rettig do it if he will. I would call it Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Solomon means more to the people than the Queen of Sheba.

“I have been unable to locate any books on Solomon that give any more than does the Life of Solomon and nothing to give illustrations although I had a man put in a whole day at the public library in Chicago.”

Al Ringling wrote Rettig again on November 17th saying, “Your favor of the 25th just received. The spectacle we have in mind is Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Of course we would not wish any one to know this besides yourself. We would hope to get started at this as soon as possible. In fact I have done some work on this spectacle; but if we could arrange with you would you not consider what I have done in this line.

“In the first place we would like to know what your terms would be; you to look after the scenery and paint same, we of course to pay carpenter work and material. I wish to say as far as the scenery is concerned we would like to do this spectacle in one scene if pos-



sible. By this means we could fix the one scene so that the public that are seated on each side of the scenery could see the show good. This scenery to be set stuff. So please let me know your conditions, and we will be able to give you a decided answer in return.

Rettig answered Al Ringling on November 28th saying, "Note what you say about getting to work on Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. It is a fine subject and was only very cheaply done original."

"When I first produced the show it made quite a hit with the Masons, who all congratulated me, gave me the grip, which not being a Mason I did not recognize. Then they asked me if I was a Mason. When I said no, they wondered how I had learned all about their paraphernalia. I had gone to the same fountainhead as the original Masons for my information. Now as terms are the main thing, to settle before we go anything further, I will state that for \$7,500 I will do my part as per our former contract."

"If this is agreeable I can arrange to come see you December 7. In the meantime I will freshen my memory so I can talk intelligently on the arrangements of costumes for the number of people you will have."

Meanwhile, on November 19th John wrote Al saying, "In regard to costume plates for Solomon, I have searched high and low for them in Bridgeport, but am unable to locate them. They were all sent to Alf Ringling in New York a year ago last winter and he says he expressed them back to Bridgeport, but I doubt whether we ever received them there."

"The costumes for the Barnum spectacle were all made by Landolf in Paris, France, and he probably has a set, or a good many of them, which I can probably get as I expect Landolf will make a lot of costumes for Barnum this year."

Al wrote Rettig on December 4 saying, "The amount you ask is altogether more than we could afford to pay. The show business now days dose not warrant such an expenditure."

"Would you care to make us a proposition, we to put the spectacle together and arrange same and you to furnish the plates for costumes



The 1914 Ringling Bros. program featuring the Solomon spec.

and props? If you would prefer to do so you could also furnish the scenery.

"By experimenting we have found a way to put in scenery and not stop the people on each side of the scene from seeing the show."

Rettig replied to Al on December 5 saying, "Note what you say about the scenery. I will consider that. I do not believe my price is big for it was usual \$10,000 before I did yours for \$9,000."

"This is my proposition, I will do the work necessary, as I did before for you, the one change, design, but not paint the scenery for the sum of six thousand dollars."

While the negotiations were going on with Rettig the brothers were going full speed ahead in putting Solomon together. Al wrote to John on December 6 saying in part, "Have you any of the Solomon and Queen of Sheba wardrobe there that was used when the Barnum show was in Europe? I should think your wardrobe man would know this and what they were used for. If you have anything there and you think was really good in the Solomon can you send samples of same, and let us know what they were used for? Ask your wardrobe man if he has any Levite costumes that were used in Solomon. If so, could you send us one costume of same? It is very easy for us to get the costumes for King

Solomon and this we can get and have made fine here in Chicago."

John Rettig wrote back to Al on December 13 and dropped a bomb on the relationship saying, "Sorry we cannot come to terms, as I would take pleasure in designing some striking and original costumes."

"Had I done the work however I would have not claimed the royalty as per my contract with the Robinsons, but of course under the circumstances you understand I will claim my rights."

"I also retain rights to produce except for circus 'Solomon and the Queen of Sheba' and Solomon's Temple which I intend to use among many others in my contemplated moving picture productions. Of course you think my terms steep, but I spent thousands of dollars and years of time in historical research, my shows bear closest criticism from experts and each one has the correct individual character and does not look like some other show with a different title."

The brothers asked Walter Chamberlin, a Chicago patent attorney, to look into Rettig's copyright. Chamberlin wrote to Al Ringling on December 19, "Whether or not we will have to change the title from Solomon and the Queen of Sheba to Solomon in All His Glory or some other title depends upon my investigation of Rettig's rights, but I have no question at all but that you can go ahead with your preparation for the spectacle and I will advise you some time next week definitely as to the title."

Chamberlin, who had been in consultation with Ringling attorney John M. Kelley, wrote Al on December 24 saying, "Mr. Kelley and myself have been in consultation this afternoon. He tells me that it is practically impossible for you to put on the proposed spectacle without using more or less of what you recollect Rettig used with the Robinson people. It is therefore seems advisable to me that before proceeding any further we ought to make sure as to exactly what exclusive rights Rettig or Robinson have in this matter and I know of no way of ascertaining except by going to them. Personally I am strongly in favor of interviewing



these gentlemen and attempting to make a settlement provided we are satisfied that they have any grounds for proceeding against us in case we put the spectacle on."

Al wrote Charles on December 25 saying, "We have gone ahead with the spectacle and I think Solomon and the Queen of Arabia will be fine. The wardrobe certainly will be the best we ever had, but it is hard telling how we are going to come out in regards to this title. I think the only way out is to get the rights from Rettig or Robinson, who ever has them. I just telephoned John Kelley to this effect and he is going to Cincinnati this evening. Kelley was here night before last.

"There cannot be much change in the spectacle from what they had. In fact I don't see how there could be. I told this to Kelley. As we surely wish to have this right before we put it on, as we would not like to be in a position where they could enjoin us from putting the spectacle before the people."

On January 3, 1914 Kelley wrote Charles Ringling, "Rettig was very 'sore' Charles. It was hard to deal with him at all. His wife butted in to the negotiations and this made it worse as she continually wanted to get advises of an attorney to protect them in the deal.

"I am closing today--\$1,000. At 1:30 A. M. today I got them down to \$500 for the use of the title for circus purposes only and \$1,500 for complete assignment of his rights, and today got the final figure of \$1,000 for complete assignment of his rights in all three titles copyrighted. He struck out for the big values on his copyrights for moving picture purposes.

"While I am satisfied that Robinson has little interest, if any, yet it might make it more safe for us if we had an assignment from him.



Part of the Solomon cast in the back yard.

But he may have long ago assigned his interest to Johnnie Robinson? I have this legal point in mind. Rettig cannot locate the certificate issued by the Copyright office. Thinks he

A page from the 1914 Ringling program.

turned it over to Robinson. Thinks only paper ever executed is the one which I sent you a copy."

Kelley sent this telegram to Al Ringling in Baraboo, "At one o'clock this morning I practically got Rettig to agree to 5 hundred for use of title for circus rights only. He would not close tonight, as it is late. But think can close in morning. I got offer of fifteen hundred for assignment of all rights. Think purchase of complete rights desirable if he retained moving picture rights. They might make it unpleasant and hurt show. You now best advise."

On the sixth day of January 1914 John Rettig assigned all of his rights in his copyright Solomon King of Israel "No. 16981 filed in my name in U. S. Copyright Office June 5, 1889."

After all rights were transferred the Ringling brothers went ahead with Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. It was directed by Albert Ringling in 1914 and 1915.

Scene one took place in the great Judgment Hall. Scene two was in the streets of Jerusalem. Scene three was at the gates of the holy city. Scene four was in the palace of the king. There were nineteen characters in the cast. This was one of the most elaborate productions ever presented by the Ringling show.

In September 1914 John Kelley wrote to the Strobridge Lithographing Company in Cincinnati, Ohio asking if they had copyrighted the special paper they had produced for Ringling's Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Strobridge answered on September 10 saying in part, "We made application on May 5 and sent necessary copies to Washington on the same day for all of the subjects of Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, for which application

RINGLING BROS.' STUPENDOUS NEW SPECTACLE FEATURE

# SOLOMON AND THE QUEEN OF SHEBA

Produced under the Personal Direction of MR. AL. RINGLING

Time, 1000 B. C. Place, Jerusalem

Scene I--THE GREAT JUDGMENT HALL  
Scene II--THE STREETS OF JERUSALEM  
Scene III--AT THE GATES OF THE HOLY CITY  
Scene IV--IN THE PALACE OF THE KING

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

SOLOMON.....	King of Israel	HANNAH.....	The True Mother
ZADOK.....	} High Priests of the Temple	AZUBAH.....	The False Mother
ABIATHAR.....		BALKIS.....	Queen of Sheba
BENAIHA.....	Captain of the Guard	OPDRUSA.....	} 1st Ladies in Waiting to the Queen
AZARIAH.....	A General	TOUMI.....	
ZABUD.....	Chief Advisor to the King	BELVA.....	
AHISHAR.....	Master of Ceremony	AKBAR.....	Minister to Balkis
JEHOSHAPHAT.....	Master of the Tribute	HARMAK.....	Special Envoy of the Queen
ELIHOREPH.....	} Scribes to the King	AMENHAT.....	An Arabian Wonder Worker
AHIAH.....			

AND

THE PRINCES, GOVERNORS AND NOBILITY OF ISRAEL; MASTERS OF CEREMONY, OFFICERS AND LADIES OF THE COURT, ENVOYS AND EMBASSADORS FROM FOREIGN LANDS, ASTROLOGERS, DANCERS, ENTERTAINERS, COURT MUSICIANS, FLOWER GIRLS, PRIESTS, INCENSE BEARERS, CORYPHEES, SOLDIERS, PRISONERS, SLAVES, FIGURANTES, GUARDS, ATHLETES, ARABIAN COURTIERS, NECROMANCERS, SAGES, CAMEL DRIVERS, TRAINS OF VISITING DIGNITARIES, POPULACE OF JERUSALEM, ETC.

## PRODUCING STAFF

Entry and Pantomime Music Composed by.....	MR. FALTIS EFFENDI
Grand Ballet Music Composed by.....	MR. J. J. RICHARDS
Scenery Designed and Painted by.....	SOSMAN & LANDIS CO.
Costumes and Accessories Designed by.....	MR. WILLIAM CROWE
Costumes and Accessories Executed by.....	HENDERSON-AMES CO.
Ballet Dresses Designed and Executed by.....	MR. F. SCHOULTZ
Orchestra under the Direction of.....	MR. J. J. RICHARDS
Stage and Ballet under the Direction of.....	MR. OTTOKAR BARTIK



had not previously been made and hope we have 'duly' copyrighted all the subjects, but, as we wrote you on May 5 we had failed to file our applications up to that time."



The 1916 Ringling program featuring Cinderella.

The 1916 and 1917 spec of the World's Greatest Show was Cinderella, under the personal direction of Charles E. Ringling. (Albert Ringling died on January 1, 1916.)

Scene one was in the Fairyland Kingdom. It was the proclamation.

Scene two was in the home of Cinderella. It was the transformation.

Scene three was in the streets of the magic city. It was the departure.

Scene four was in the grand ballroom. It was the loss of the slipper.

Scene five was on the king's highway. It was by the royal command.

Scene six was in the palace of the King. It was the triumph of Cinderella.

This spectacle required extensive instructions for the movement of dozens of people and horses. Here is a part of the script for the Cinderella production.

"Act one. Scene one the home of Cinderella.

"As the curtain rises Cinderella is sweeping the hearth, Lord Pomposo, Lady Pomposo, sister Crosspatch and sister Make-believe are grouped at bench and table. At left lower terrace (table and two benches) 6 citizens

(Co L) are playing cards. At right lower terrace (table and chairs) 12 citizens-four seated, others standing about and drinking (cups and tankards) some serving. The Chief Cryer to King Magnifico with attendants passes from R E across front to L. E. publishing the Royal Command that all attend a Grand Ball in honor of Prince Charming (order of group as follows). Chief Cryer with horn-4 Bell Ringers-3 Gong Men-4 Guards-Proclamation Banner Bearer-4 Guards-Ce Z-12 Citizens, as they pass enter with the Chief Cryer stops and calls attention of Lord Pomposo to the Proclamation, Chief Cryer now falls in at rear of his "cryer procession's" as they pass L and exit. The Pomposo family shows great excitement over the invitation. The sisters command Cinderella to attend them, mother and father dance attendance upon them while they decorate themselves, powder, arrange hair and beauty patches and add long plume to hair etc. The two sisters treat Cinderella scornfully, Lady Pomposo strikes her, all exit R L E except Cinderella who falls to her knees weeping. The Fairy Godmother as Witch, followed by six Gnomes enters LE (to arrive at center as Lady Pomposo strikes Cinderella) she ascends front as the Pomposo family exit. The Gnomes (dwarfs) busy themselves about center front steps and lattice fence (antics). Gnomes have pumpkins, which they roll about from one to another. Fairy Godmother who is dressed as a Witch (stooped with cane) removes cape and hat and stands revealed as the Fairy Godmother. She commands the attention of the Fairy Queen and the Fairy Ariel who descend (from behind sky border on wire.) (Arrange men to work wire) (In Coliseum they cannot be swung in on wires-they appear in doors R & L.) Fairy Godmother touches Cinderella with her wand and her ragged dress drops revealing her in a beautiful costume of a Princess. Fairy Ariel presents her with a tiara and the Fairy Queen gives her a pair of Crystal Slippers, as the slippers are presented the six Brownies enter the room up steps bringing Cinderella a huge bouquet. Cinderella exits L door. CURTAIN.

"Between Act one and Act two Cinderella is shown on her way to the Grand Hall in her carriage with attendants. They enter L pass the across to R and exit.

"Order of Procession:

"Knights in Armor Mounted (13)

"4 Guards on foot (Co C)

"Cinderella in Coach drawn by 4 ponies

"Georgette footman

"4 Guards (Co C)

"8 Negro servants (Co T) omit rat headslass band around head

"Scene changes to terrace of the King's Palace. Seats (CO for King, Queen and Prince."

The entire story of Cinderella was told in pantomime. Gestures, signs, and action were performed by the characters.

The final pageant of the Ringling show was In Days of Old or when Knighthood was in Flower, in 1918. Charles E. Ringling produced it.

There were thirty-two characters. John Agee played Sir Knight Valiant, Jenny Rooney was Princess Rosalind and Lulu Davenport was Queen Charming. There were four pages; two flower girls; a Bridesmaid; a Maid of Honor; four trumpeters; four huntsmen; four standard bearer Knights; four gentlemen in waiting; four ladies in waiting; four Negro spearmen; eight Arab warders.

The ballet included eight dancing girls; twenty-four minuet dancers; twelve music girls; and twelve butterfly girls. There were sixteen King's guards, sixteen Knights guards, eight Cavaliers, eight citizens, eight choir boys, twenty-four ladies and gentlemen, twelve flag carriers (property men used), twenty-four soldiers (from grooms and property men), eight ax men (elephant men), eight bow men (from cook house), and twelve citizens (animal men). Eighty-five horses were used in the pageant.

The combining of the Barnum and Ringling shows in 1919 signaled the end of the big mammoth stage specs.

The Ringling-Barnum specs from 1919 to 1956 will be covered in part two of this article.

The John Robinson 10 Big Shows hired Charles Constantine to produce and direct King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba in 1891. It was advertised as a "Giant Biblical





John Robinson 1891 Solomon litho. Library of Congress.

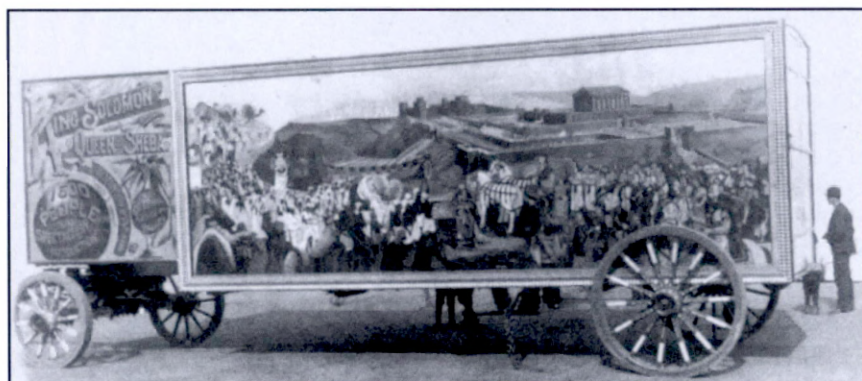
Sceneographic Spectacle." F. W. Zaulig composed special music and the scenery as designed and painted by John Rettig. It was advertised a \$100,000 spectacular presented in front of a 300-foot long special drop curtain.

There were nine principal characters and sixty-seven women in the grand ballet.

Contrary to other circuses this mammoth production was presented at the start of the performance.

Part one took place in the capital of Sheb, in Arabia, in the interior of the

An enormous scenery wagon on the Robinson show about 1900. Fred Pfening III collection.



the palace of the Queen of Sheba. The opening represented the grand banquet in the palace. The grand display and floral pageant introduced the serpent girls, the ancient guards, the Moorish girls entire Corps de Ballet.

Part two took place in the exterior of the city of Jerusalem, showing the walls and towers and the great temple.

Part three showed the interior of King Solomon's temple. The Ark of the Covenant was prominently displayed. King Solomon, with his pages, warriors and the High Priest advanced to meet the queen. Then came the grand triumphal march with different tribes from Jerusalem, the King's musicians, the

Captain of the guard on horseback, the ancient guards, the Moorish girls, the high priest, King Solomon's wives, slaves with incense burners, King Solomon in a chariot, colored warriors, the Queen of Sheba on a canopy carried by slaves, the Queen's maids, Arabs on horseback and Nubians leading wild animals.

All returned to the temple Court and made their obeisance to King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. Solomon and the Queen were then enthroned and amid the fanfare of trumpets the sports, games and pastimes began, consisting of chariot races, standing races, flat races and heat races were introduced.

The finale was the grand ballet,

presenting a grant scene of bewitching loveliness and artistic skill.

Dick Conover commented, "The Robinsons were evidently sold on the merit of the big spectacles and wasted no time in following Barnum & Bailey with their 'King Solomon,' first in 1891 and continuing every year thereafter there after until the show suspended operations after the not-so-profitable 1894 tour. By this



The cover of the 1899 Robinson program.

time the scenery and wardrobe must have been quite shoddy. Compared to those on Barnum & Bailey, both in magnitude of the sets and in the number of performers, the Robinson production was decidedly second or third-rate.

"After the control of the show reverted to the Robinsons, following the lease to the Ringlings in 1898, the spectacle was revived in 1899 for a protracted run that continued through 1906. While new sets were built for this second edition, and the production appears to have been somewhat more elaborate, it is quite probable that the country had endured quite enough of Sheba by this time, at least, it was spared the revival that the preseason publicity promised for 1910."

In 1892 James A. Bailey and Joseph T. McCaddon, owners of the Adam Forepaugh Circus, presented



another super spectacle, directed by John Rettig. "The Fall of Nineveh, described as the dawn of a new era in outdoor-tented exhibitions is marked by the presentation in a grand allied conjunction with, and as an integral part of the Adam Forepaugh Shows. The most stupendous display of spectacular splendors and grandeur known to ancient and modern times."

Two sheet upright litho used by Forepaugh in 1892. Cincinnati Art Museum.

It was advertised as having special scenery, chariots, shields, weapons, battering rams, war clubs, spears, trappings, harness, robes and other paraphernalia. It was said to include 1,000 men, women and children, 200 star premieres, seconds, cotpees in the grand corps de ballet. The spectacle was presented with scenery.

Auguste Siegrist was stage manager and Luca Resta was Maitre de Ballet. There were nine property men and eight scenery men. There were fifty-one women in the ballet and twenty-eight male dancers. The production was presented in five tableaux.

The first scene showed the walls and watch towers of Nineveh. The second showed the walls being moved away showing the city of Nineveh with a view of the Tigris River. The third scene showed the walls of Nineveh closing again. The fourth scene had the same setting and introduced the grand astronomical ballet. The final scene presented trumpets in the distance with a company of Niveite warriors rushing the defense of the King.

In 1896 the Great Wallace Show presented The Humiliation of Cleopatra and the Triumph of

Augustus. This was a processional march, as Uncle Ben Wallace did not choose to remove the paying seats in the backside of the reserves.

Great Wallace presented the Festival of Olympus, with nineteen ballet girls in 1897. In 1899 Wallace presented the Panorama of Regal Magnificence. The ballet consisted of twenty women that year.

For many years the Grand Review, which preceded the regular performance of Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show was a thrilling pageant of rough riders of the world and soldiers of all nations. In 1916 Buffalo Bill was the star attraction on Miller and Arlington's Wild West Show, which presented an impressive military pageant appropriately titled Preparedness.

It has long been the custom of circuses to employ advertising experts to write copy for their heralds and couriers. Such bill

writing press agents evidently knew every adjective in the dictionary for they could describe the most commonplace circus acts in a way that would make them seem wonders to behold. But when they had such super specs as Nero, Columbus and Ninevah to write about they turned out masterpieces of descriptive copy, which they could read later in print with a clear conscience. They didn't exaggerate—much.

In the middle 1920s a circus press agent produced his first spec. It, like all that were to follow, was a tournament, or processional format, using

the hippodrome track and all rings.

Rex de Roselli's show business career started with a tented stock company. He then worked with silent film companies. de Roselli joined the Al G. Barnes Circus in 1917 as a press agent back with the show. He continued in that position for many years. However his first spectacle was the 1924 Barnes opener titled Pocahontas at the Court of Queen Ann, which was repeated in 1925 and 1926. Harry Thomas, who succeeded de Roselli as spec producer on Cole Bros., said he had seen Alice in Jungle Land on Barnes and that Roselli had produced it. However, no reference can be found connecting de Roselli to that spectacle.

The American Circus Corporation hired de Roselli in 1927 to produce specs for its circuses. His first effort for Hagenbeck-Wallace was Spectacle of Beauty in 1927. The following year he produced Geisha for the Wallace show, which was repeated in 1929.

However, de Roselli also produced King Solomon for the John Robinson Circus in 1928 and 1929. He did double-duty in 1930 when he staged Golden Orient for Hagenbeck-Wallace and Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt for John Robinson. Golden Orient was repeated in 1931. Cleopatra was revived for Hagenbeck-Wallace in 1932. The Soudan was the de Roselli spec on Hagenbeck in 1933.

Rex de Roselli, producer of circus spectacles.

In 1934 and 1935 he staged Persia for Hagenbeck-Wallace, De Roselli followed Adkins and Terrell to the new Cole

Bros.-Clyde Beatty Circus in 1935 and produced Serenade of Spain for the 1935 performance. The spec was repeated in 1936 and 1937. In 1938 he produced La Seville for Cole. It was repeated in 1939. He also staged La Argentina for the 1938 Robbins Bros. Circus. In his final years he produced La Habana for Cole in 1940 and Pan Americana in 1941. Rex de Roselli died in East St. Louis, Illinois on July 22, 1941.



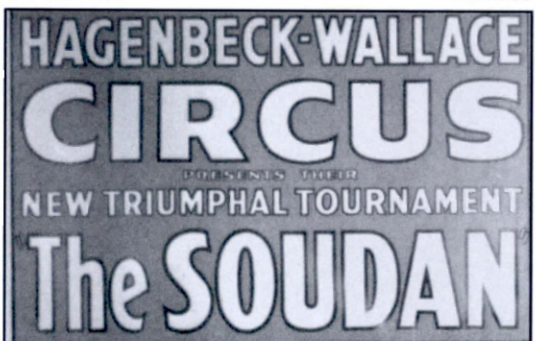




In 1919 Sells-Floto presented the Birth of the Rainbow spec.



In 1925 Christy Bros. featured Noah an the Ark.



A 1933 Hagenbeck-Wallace litho for Soudan.

He was in that city handling press for Cole that played there the following day. He was the most prolific producers of circus specs and is credited with first using fireworks in a circus performance.

After 1900 other circuses presented these specs.

The Forepaugh-Sells Circus spec in 1905 was Circus Panama.

The spec on the Great Floto show in 1905 was Mysterious India. In 1905 the Texas Bill Wild West spec was Battle of Wounded Knee.

Gollmar Bros. Circus presented

sented Cinderella in Jung-le Land.

The Wheeler Bros. Circus presented David and Goliath in 1916.

The Al G. Barnes Circus spec in 1917 and 1918 was The Conquest of Nyanze. In 1919,

1920, 1921 and 1922 the Barnes show presented

Alice in Jungle Land. In 1924, 1925 and 1926 the feature was Pocahontas at the Court of Queen Ann. In 1927, 1928 and 1929 the Barnes show presented Aladdin and Parade of Gold. In 1930 and

1931 two specs were presented, Persia as well as the Pageant of Gold. In 1932 and 1933 it was just the Pageant of Gold. Fiesta of the Rio Grande was the Barnes spec in 1935 and 1936. Old Mexico was the 1937 Barnes spec.

Hagenbeck-Wallace's spec in 1923 was A Night in Persia. In 1925 Arabia was the spec. In 1927 the spec was Spectacle of Beauty and Romance. Produced by Rex de Roselli. In 1928 and 1929 the Wallace show presented Geisha. The 1930 and 1931 the Hagenbeck-Wallace spec was called The Golden Orient, produced by Red de Roselli. The 1932 Spec was title Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt, produced by Roselli. In 1933 the spec was The Soudan. Persia

Queen Cleopatra's Birthday in 1907. And Entrance of Anthony and Cleopatra into Alexandria in 1909.

Howe's Great London's spec in 1915 and 1916 was the Garland of Roses. In 1922 the show pre-

was repeated in 1934 and 1935. It was produced by Roselli. The 1937 Hagenbeck spec was Pharaoh's Caravan, produced by Ralph Clawson.

In 1923 and 1924 John Robinson's Circus featured Peter Pan in Animal Land. In 1925 it was Arabia. In 1925, 1926 and 1927 the Robinson spec was Fairyland. In 1928 and 1929 the Robinson show presented King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba. written and directed by Rex de Roselli. The spec in 1930, again produced by Rex de Roselli, was called

BROOKLYN-BENSONHURST SIX DAYS MAY  
Kings Highway and Bay Park- Starting  
way (22d Ave.)-Sea Beach MONDAY 27  
and West End Lines

MILLER BROS.  
**101 RANCH**  
*Wild West*  
1100 PEOPLE - 200 INDIANS - 600 ANIMALS  
Featuring THE MIGHTY SPECTACLE  
**"Julius Caesar"**  
TWICE DAILY 2 AND 8 P.M.  
**NEW STREET MON. 27**  
**PARADE MAY 27**

A 1929 101 Ranch newspaper ad for Julius Caesar.

Cleopatra, Queen of Egypt.

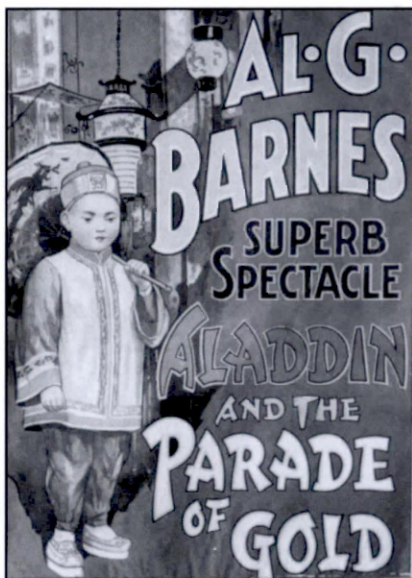
In 1918 and 1919 and the Sells-Floto Circus presented America and the Birth of the Rainbow. In 1922 it was A Night in Cairo. In 1923 the Floto show featured A Night in Persia. In 1924 and 1925 it was The Bride and the Beasts. In 1927 the Floto show presented Birth of a Rainbow. In 1928 the Floto spec was Dance of the Garlands.

In 1920 Christy Bros. featured The Birth of the Rainbow. From 1924 through 1929 the Christy spec was Noah and the Ark.

Golden Bros. presented Cinderella in Jungle Land in 1923.

The Robbins Bros. Circus spec in





A 1932 Al G. Barnes Circus poster featuring the Parade of Gold.

1926 and 1927 was the Historic Review of America. In 1930 Robbins Bros. presented Mother Goose.

In 1923 Sparks Circus presented Scenes from the Time of King Tut. The Sparks spec in 1924 was An Egyptian Fantasy. In 1925 and 1926 it was Wedding of L'Ora. In 1929 Sparks presented Lily of the Nile.

In 1929 and 1930 the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West presented Julius Caesar. The pageant included Roman standing and chariot races. There were eight principal parts as well as dancing girls, priests, soldiers and royal entourages.

Michael Means brings us up to date as he told of spectacles presented by today's truck circuses. "Anyone acquainted with specs offered today, might have difficulty imagining what specs were like before the 1920s. We are used to a procession around the rings of performers and animals, the former often in special costumes and the latter elegantly presented, all then assem-

bling in the rings for a musical lead-in to the first series of acts. The largest circuses often attempt something grander. Barbara Miller Byrd, co-owner of the Carson and Barnes Circus, likens the spec to the old street parades that died out half a century ago."

Harry Thomas produced Sampanca for Cole in 1942. It was followed by The Fate of the Garlands in the performance. Thomas continued with The Conquest of Coronado in 1943.

The 1944 Cole spec was The Castle of the Taj Mahal, another Thomas production, Thomas continued with Caliph of Bagdad in 1945.

Caravan to Mecca was the Cole spec

Photos of a recent typical Barbara Byrd spec on Carson & Barnes Circus.



Flag bearers leading the 1941 Cole Bros. spec Pan-Americana.

in 1946, also a Thomas production.

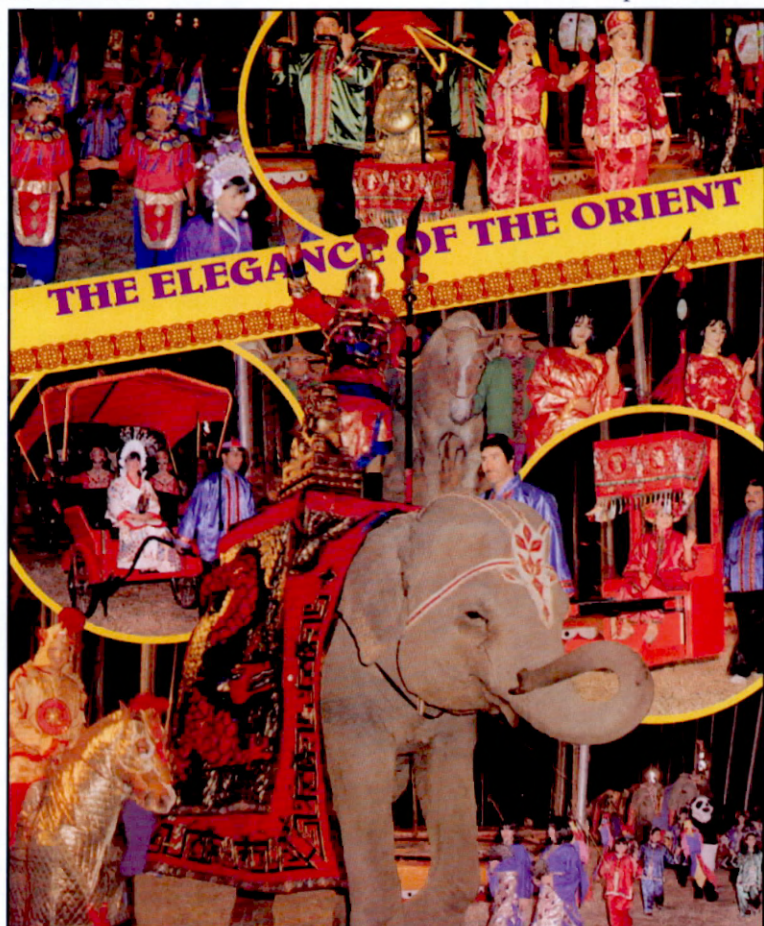
The 1947 production for Cole was The Clown is King. Harry Thomas' final spec for Cole in 1948 was Ponce De Leon an the Fountain of Youth. In 1949 the Cole spec was titled Mandalay.

In recent years Barbara Byrd has planned, staged and costumed such spectacles as A Circus Trip Around

the World, Caravan from Cathay, The Circus on Parade, The Reign of Caesar, Old Mexico, The Clown is King, To America-With Love, Rio Razzle Dazzle, The Golden Age of Chivalry, The Golden Olden West, Tropical Treasurers, The Raucous Roaring Twenties, Aztec Amazement, Viva Espana, and The Elegance of the Orient.

The Carson and Barnes processional spectacles were presented during the performance as opposed to being the opening of the show.

The Circus World Museum Research Center, Richard J. Reynolds III and Dr. Michael H. Means contributed material and illustrations for this article.





**HAPPY**  
*Holidays*

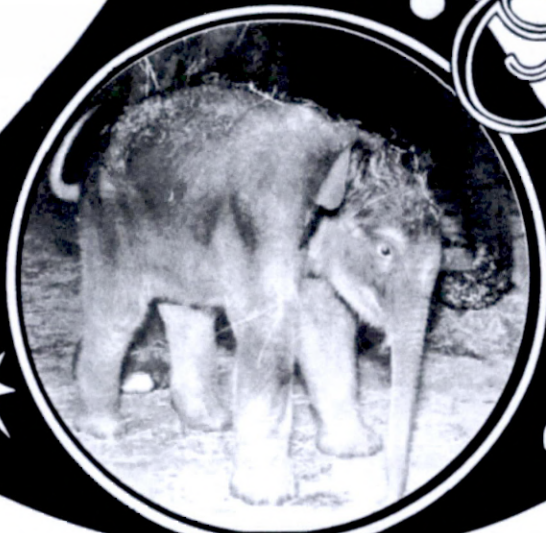
**TO EVERYONE**

**AND**

**A**

**SUCCESSFUL**

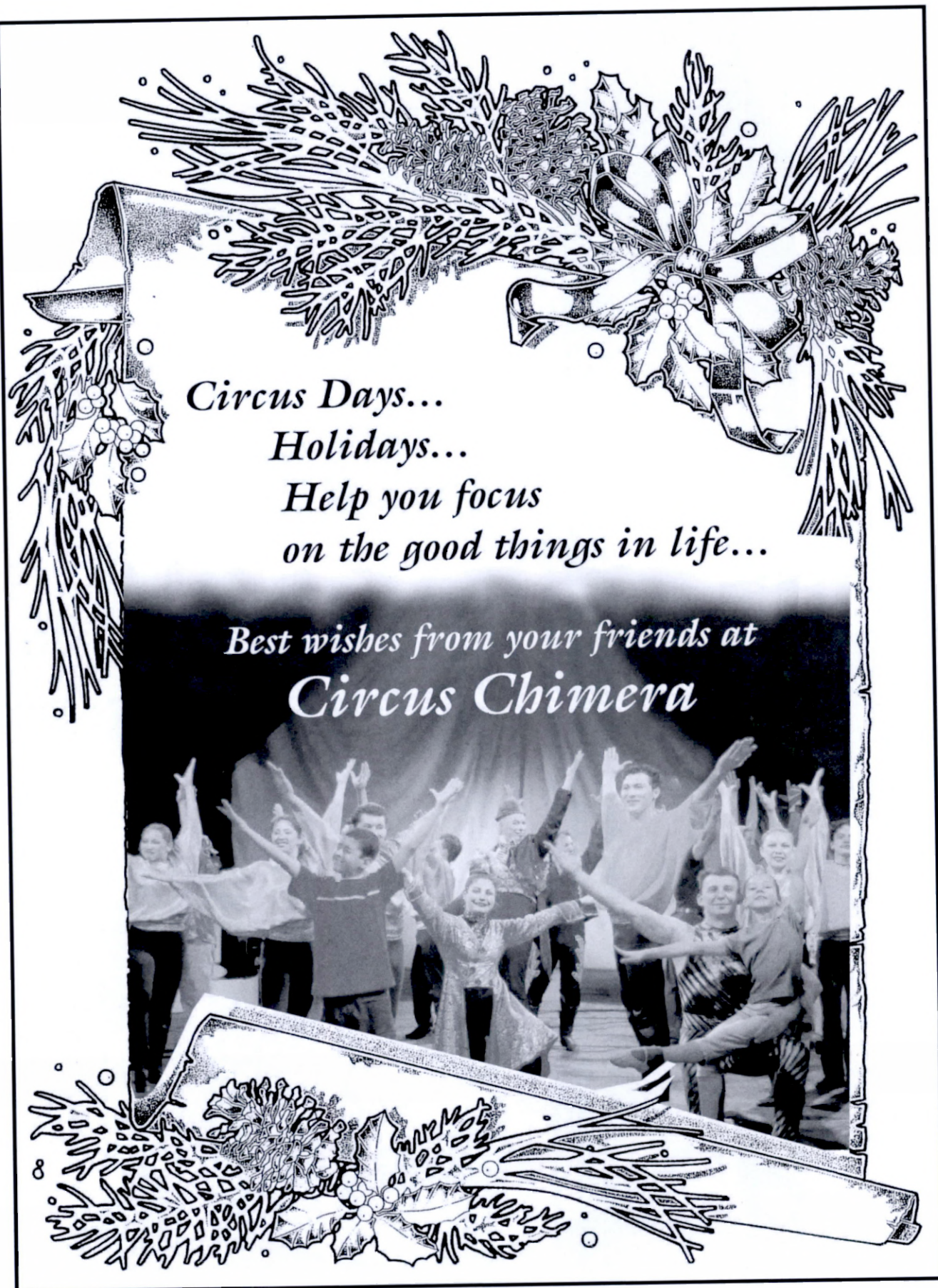
**NEW YEAR!**



From  
Obert, Jennie  
The Cast and Crew  
and All Members of

**CARSON BARNES**  
**5-RING**  
**CIRCUS**







# HORSELESS IN NASHVILLE, 1864

By Stuart Thayer

*This paper was presented at the 2003 Circus Historical Society convention in Peru, Indiana.*

During the Civil War circuses made a point of locating their tents as near to troop concentrations as they could. Idle soldiers with money in their pockets were a promising audience.

James A. Nixon closed his show in Alexandria, Virginia for a month when business fell off in April 1863, and reopened when fresh troops were quartered in the town. Dan Castello, in 1864, followed the Seventeenth Corps down the Mississippi from Memphis into Arkansas, performing at every place the army encamped. These are just two examples of the affinity between tent shows and the army. The procedure was an extension of the habit that the circus had throughout its early existence of setting up wherever crowds might gather. Circuit court hearings, legislative sessions, race meetings, and militia musters were all popular venues for performance.

In November of 1864 George Thomas' Union forces and John Bell Hood's Rebel army were facing off at Nashville, Tennessee, for what was expected to be an important engagement. A new circus title, Howes & Norton's Champion Circus, organized in Chicago, moved to Nashville to take advantage of expected crowds.

The title was a successor one to Robinson & Howes' Champion Circus, which had been on tour in Ohio and Michigan and Western Pennsylvania during the summer of 1864. It also contained a portion of Lake & Co.'s Mammoth Circus, which had ended its season on the upper Ohio River.

Robinson & Howes' was owned by James Robinson, the famous rider, and Frank J. Howes. Lake & Co. was owned by William Lake, the clown, and Horace Norton, the multi-horse rider. Robinson sold out at season's



John Lowlow, the great talking clown. Circus World Museum collection.

end to Norton, who joined Howes and some performers from each of the entities to staff their new effort.

From Lake & Co. there came William Lake, his wife Agnes, and adopted daughter Alice; Horace Norton; John Lowlow, the clown, and Silas Baldwin, the juggler. Robinson & Howes' people who went to the new roster included Frank Howes, John Glenroy, John Davenport, and Albert Aymar. To replace the loss of the great James Robinson, Charles Fish was recruited along with Henry Madigan and his son, Charles. The horses were apparently Lake's property.

Fortunately, both John Lowlow and John Glenroy left descriptions of this winter show, though their recitations vary a great deal in some respects. Writing in the New York Sun, Lowlow said, "Every man, woman and child who was in Nashville during the winter of '64 and '65 will remember Bill Lake and Levi North's circus, which showed there from October 1864 to February 1865." Lowlow gave this interview when he was an old man and was confused in his titles. In 1863 Lake, Norton and Levi North had been partners, but North had sold out at the end of that

season.

"We got that far south on our regular route," he continued, "And then one fine morning we found that we were booked to stay in Nashville until Hood whipped Thomas or Thomas whipped Hood."

In his autobiography, Glenroy said, "On arriving at Nashville we found that the army of the South under General Hood lay outside of the town (in Brentwood), and between it and the town lay the Union army under Thomas. We planted our canvas in the very heart of the city (on Market Street near the Louisville and Nashville Depot), thinking thereby to escape the shells of the Rebel army, but it was a common occurrence during our stay of six weeks there for the shells to keep dropping and bursting four or five times a day within a distance of twenty yards from our canvas."

Lowlow remembered that, "We run our prices up to a dollar in good Federal money for a single ticket, twenty-five cents for an orange, and twenty-five cents for a glass of pink lemonade. There were plenty of strangers and plenty of money in town, and as nobody knew how long he would keep his property they were not backwards in blowing it in at the show."

Glenroy recalled that, "During our stay there some of our boys thought that they would like to go and see the entrenchments, so they started out one morning, and on their arrival at the (front) they were immediately seized by our own troops and made to work at digging for three hours each. A more tired, worn out and sorry looking set of men were never seen than they were when they returned."

Lowlow was one of these involuntary workmen, and he reported that "Lake, Norton, and myself, got permits from General Thomas to go out to the battlefield and view the battle. We were non-combatants, you understand, and you may rely upon it, we



kept out of gunshot range for the first half-hour. But, all at once, an aide came riding up to our stand. 'Here, you three' he said, 'get shovels and report at the front for duty.'

"We showed him our permits, but it was no go; all permits had been revoked within the hour, he said, and so we were hustled off to the front to help throw up a slight fortification. We were all experienced in that sort of work, having worked at throwing up the circus ring many a time; but never before had we handled a shovel under fire. The bullets were flying around us pretty thickly, and in five minutes every regular in our vicinity knew who we were and the circumstances under which we had been pressed into service. They geyed us unmercifully. I was not exactly scared, but I did not feel first-rate, and had to put on a little extra swag-ger to hide my nervousness."

"In Nashville," Glenroy remembered, "we boarded in a house kept by a lady of southern sympathies, and so confident were those whose sympathies were with the South that Hood could and would beat Thomas, that they got ready to give a reception to Hood on his entrance to the city."

The circus had begun performing on 22 November. On 6 December, at nine o'clock in the morning, according to Lowlow, the personnel were in the ring practicing a new grand entry when an army officer appeared. He took Lake aside and informed him that he (the officer) was requisitioning eighteen of the nineteen ring horses, refusing to take one that was lame.

In Glenroy's memory "The day after our arrival (which would have been sometime in November, not October, as Lowlow reported)

## HOWES & NORTON'S



### CHAMPION CIRCUS!

THESE FINE ARTISTS ARE SATISFIED that they have at their disposal the best Company ever brought to Nashville, and would present the names of their Artists, and the various acts they will achieve this evening:  
**LITTLE ALICE** will ride her great Hippo Act.  
**MADAM AGNES**, in her Classic Pose, upon the Elastic Cord.  
**CH. S. FISIL**, the Champion Bareback Rider.  
**JAMES MADIGAN**, in his great Somersault Act.  
**CHARLES MADIGAN**, the great Somersault Performer.  
**Great Clowns—LAKE, ATMAN, and DAVENPORT.**  
**Great American Gymnasts—BURROWS, KELLY, MADIGAN, and DONOVAN.**  
**S. CALDWELL**, the East India Juggler.  
**JNO. GLENROY**, the American Pet.  
**W. LESTER**, the celebrated Contortionist.  
**W. J. J. J. J.**, the Champion Horse Trainer.  
**H. MORTON**, the Great Yoo, Four, and Six Horse Rider.  
**J. FISIL**, the Corde Volante.  
**D. HENDERSON**, the American Hercules.  
**J. J. J. J. J.**  
**W. HOWES, W. HOWES, W. KIRKWOOD.**  
 Will Exhibit  
**On Market, near Depot,**  
 Until further notice.  
 Admission to all parts of the House, . . . 75 cts.  
 Children under 15 years of age, . . . 50 cts.  
 novis J. M. LUCHLER, Agent.

General Thomas, who was very short of horses, pressed all of ours, leaving us only two mules and one ring horse." Glenroy is obviously in error in saying it was the day after their arrival.

This Howes & Norton newspaper ad appeared in the Nashville *Dispatch* on November 22, 1864. Author's collection.

Major General James H. Wilson was in charge of Thomas' cavalry, and his scouring the area for horses gave Thomas an excuse not to attack Hood. But Grant was urging Thomas to act. This portion of the story (or stories) can be checked elsewhere, as General Thomas

had telegraphed General Grant that he would march against Hood as soon as he had a respectable force of cavalry. General Wilson was even then pressing horses, and expected to have six to eight thousand in three days, Thomas added.

The circus proceeded to give two performances a day with the one horse that had been left to it. John Lowlow tells us of Alice Lake's determination to retrieve the horses, which included three black stallions she had trained for use in her manege act. Nothing Lowlow could say served to deter her. "She was a mere girl, and with a girl's audacity she did a thing that an older person would have considered the wildest folly. She marched in on General Wilson at his headquarters on the morning of the 10th (of December) and asked for her horses back." Giving in to the girl's pleading, Wilson had the horses returned.

But Lowlow claimed that one of Wilson's officers told him that because the animals had been taught to lie down when they were touched on the haunches (this for the grand entry) they were of no use to the cavalry. In any event, after four days as

a "one horse show," Howes & Norton's program was restored.

We get a different version of events in reading Glenroy. He claims that Frank Howes went to General Thomas, but got no satisfaction. On the 7th of December, Vice President Johnson came to Nashville, and Howes laid his case before him. Johnson wired the President, and asked for instructions. Back came a telegram saying that Howes could have his horses if he provided substitutes. Thomas gave up the mounts, and Howes spent the next week rounding up eighteen replacements.

The Nashville *Dispatch* of 9 December said, "We are happy to state for the information of the lovers of exhibitions of muscular energy, and daring feats of horsemanship, that the interruption to their gratification has been removed; the famous trick horses having been returned, all is in good order. The mammoth circus is again in full blast."

"When our horses were returned to us," Glenroy reported, "each of them had a large U. S. stamped on them, but we were glad to get them back in any condition."

The Battle of Nashville was fought on the 15th and 16th of December, 1864. Contrary to what one might expect, the show was well attended. Lowlow said, "...while the guns were booming like thunder, our show was jammed. Whether the people came to meet each other, and hear the news, or whether they wanted the fun in the ring to relax their tensely strung heart-strings, I can't say, but on Thursday and Friday nights, while the battle was in progress in easy hearing, almost on the battlefield, the people and strangers in Nashville came to the circus in great crowds, and laughed like children."

Howes & Norton announced on 22 December that they were in their last week. The date ended on 24 December. According to Glenroy, Frank Howes dissolved the show almost immediately. William Lake took his family and his horses to Zanesville, Ohio, for the winter. His Hippo-Olympiad went on the road from there in April 1865. Frank Howes went to Chicago, and framed a new show. Horace Norton signed on for the summer season with Lewis B. Lent.



*Season's Greetings!*

# BIG APPLE CIRCUS



*Carnevale!*

For the 2003-2004 Tour Route  
visit [bigapplecircus.org](http://bigapplecircus.org)



# Bill English The Harvard Circusman

By Al Stencell

*This paper was presented at the 2003 Circus Historical Society convention.*

I brought these jottings along to recall my late friend and mentor Bill English.

Anyone who ever worked for Bill was familiar with his gravelly voice. If you only heard his voice and never met Bill you would assume you were dealing with a tough character. You would be right.

On Sells and Gray he stood in the marquee at show times, cigarette in one hand with his other hand tucked into his pants to support a hernia he had been nursing along for some years. Nothing around the show seemed to faze him. His smile could indicate pleasure or disapproval. On Sells and Gray when a driver got in one of the show trucks and drove over a sleeping tent worker-killing him Bill remarked: "Well, we won't have to make up his holiday pay!" On Hanneford when an excited Count Nicholas came running up to him and exclaimed that someone stole three cartons of programs: Bill quipped: "That's one way of getting rid of them."

He was a no-nonsense guy that made a young person like myself starting in the business believe that the circus business was a career just like being a banker or a lawyer. There was nothing to be ashamed of. The marks had it all wrong. You were proud to work for Bill English. Even better, you knew that your pay would always be there and on time. Like most of the older showmen of his day his word was his contract.

Bill was born in Boston July 3, 1916 and grew up there. He graduated from Harvard with degrees in business and physiology. He served in the armed forces and was a World War II veteran working in intelligence. He spoke fluent French and



Bill English on Beatty-Cole in 1960. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.

on the Beatty show's tours into Canada in the late 1950's and early 1960's he made the side show openings, the big show announcements and the pitches in French when the show played Quebec. Bill also booked the Quebec and Ontario portions of the route those seasons.

Money didn't seem to mean much too him. He lived well but not extravagant. He was a gentleman with good manners and appearances but liked

English turning a tip on Beatty-Cole.

the rougher characters found on midways and circuses. He had a particular fondness for fixers and grifters. He told me about being on various grift carnivals running a cooch show and about the blind three card monte player that followed the tip into the top after each bally and worked with his back up against an end side pole so he knew where he was if he had to duck out quickly. When marks into the girl show it was dark in there and the only thing they saw at the back end of the top was the tripod with the lantern on it. He recalled Dave Moore coming over to Gold Medal Shows to be the patch after Floyd King sloughed the grift in the King-Cristiani Bros. Circus side show because the Cristiani brothers were nervous of the action. Moore's first job on the carnival was to get the previous patch out of jail. Moore told Bill that fixing on a carnival even through there was a lot to handle with the flats and alibis and the nudity in the girl show and the half and half side show blow offs it was still easier than on a circus. The reason? On a circus you had to patch seven towns a week while on a carnival you only dealt with one.

The second circus I worked on was Sells and Gray. I was a butcher for Dick McGoughlin. Bill owned one third of the show. He had been the





side show manager on Beatty-Cole for several years. When he was on the Beatty show he spent the winter in NYC selling national corporations ads in the circus program.

The next season Bill had a concession manager named May over there who had worked ballparks for Gil Gray. May was a mess. Bill gave me the snow and apples through the office by-passing May. Someone turned me into the U.S. immigration and I was deported. Probably May!!! A few seasons later I went back over there on their Canadian tour when Johnny Walker Sr. had the stands. Bill had top staff around him despite the Beatty show trying to steal them!

He wrote after I had sent him a piece that Edward Hoagland did in the *New Yorker* about having read Hoagland's book *Cat Man* and recalled his description of the working men's sleeper as smelling of "sweat, urine, vomit and Cheap Wine." Bill said: "He should have added stale beer. I always tried to avoid having winos on Sells and Gray because they were usually sick, weak and completely undependable. Of course we had our share of alcoholics but of a different order. Noble Sims kept nipping throughout the day and sword swallower Alex Linton kept pleasantly mulled all the time but never missed a show."

I recall my first introduction to Alex occurred shortly after the buyer on the show had delivered the ice to the concession dept. I was chipping ice for the coke machine when Alex appeared with a silver milk shake container three quarters full of vodka and asked for some ice. That became a ritual through out the day and into early evening. On rough days Noble Sims would come stumbling out of the marquee, throw the candy apple onto the concession joint counter, curse the poor spending marks, then dove under the counter, lay on his back and half drain a bottle of Seagrams. Renewed he got back up, grabbed the apple tray and headed back into the top. One morning when Noble was really stewed he forgot he didn't have an apple in his



Bill English's side show company on Beatty-Cole in 1961.

hand and dipped his hand into the 250-degree candy. He was back on the lot by show time and ready for more Seagrams. Sims was adorable and had been around as a butcher working ballparks, parades, football matches and Mardi Gras. One story told by other butchers was that he almost burnt down some hotel in New Orleans making apples for the Mardi Gras parade. Bill kept him around because he was not only an old timer but one hell of a "chinaman."

We had plenty of Chinese on Sells and Gray and Noble Sims led the way early each day. The butchers first put up the marquee that rode over night in the men's side of the donicker trailer. Then we opened the panels on the side show banner-line semis. By that time the top was up and we set the long side bibles and reserve seat chairs and hung the sidewall. Then we still had to set the concession stands and make stock before show time. Once a week, usually a day the cookhouse was serving something uninteresting; Noble went around and collected a dollar from everyone and went off to the deli. We "jungled up" on cold cuts, bagels, different breads, cheeses and olives. Noble also made sure the sleeper was kept clean and that everyone made their beds each day.

Both Dave Mullaney and Stuart Miller remained life long friends after we worked together on Sells and Gary and Paul Hudson later spent a season as my

superintendent the first year I had Martin and Downs out.

Bill told me he learned to sell banners under the eye of Richard Scatterday on Kelly-Miller. We joked about the ton of dimes you had to carry working heel and toe banners out of a pay phone. People today don't know what show biz was in those days. Fans haven't a clue what some of these guys did or no idea

how hard they worked and how much they enjoyed doing it. Bill was also around Herb Walters with concessions and also on various grift truck carnivals with girl shows. He recalled playing one Kentucky town where the locals were shooting out the lights on the merry-go-round as it went around.

One year on the Hanneford Circus we settle up the concessions at the end of the tour in a diner around 2 A.M. outside Lynn, Massachusetts. I had the garbage and rubber on the Hanneford Circus, which Bill had started. Over eggs and coffee he told me of his days in Boston. He said: "I worked at the old Howard Burlesque Theatre when I was in school. This was the 1930's. You could smell that joint. They'd been smoking in there for years and years. You could smell the joint when you bought a ticket to go in. It was a real antique place but it was a classic house. Some of the comedians of the time were as big a draw as the strippers. The butchers at the Howard worked through the whole show. Most burlesque houses they made the candy pitch at intermission period. In the 'Hoard' you worked ice cream, cold drinks, popcorn, candy bars. Up and down the aisles the whole show just like a circus. The Howard had two act bur-

The Sells & Gray Circus ticket semi in 1971.





lesque with a vaudeville act in between. The candy pitch always came before the show started because there was no intermission between Act 1 and Act 2; just the vaud act. I remember seeing Billy Pape and a gal he married doing a perch act there.

"There were three shows a day. They opened at 10 A.M. with movies. The first show started at noon. The second at 2:30. Both were general admission. The eight o'clock night show was reserved seating. Saturday midnight show was also reserved seating hard tickets and uniformed ushers. The house was dark Sundays. Fifty cents daytime and 75 cents at night and the midnight show. The house seated 600, so they was no big money made."

Speaking of money around shows Bill told me in 1993: "When I was on the Beatty show we were paying workingmen \$2.00 a day plus scoff and flop. That was standard at the time. When I had Sells and Gray we were paying \$28.00 a week. Now the Beatty show pays a minimum of \$75.00 and some get a hundred dollars."

Bill's Circus Classics was an eye opener for sharp folks in the business. You didn't need to knock yourself out for 45 weeks. You could gross just as much with twelve to sixteen weeks of well promoted and advertised indoor dates. When Bill decided to get out of Sells and Gray he turned to Art Concello and Art and Phillip Morris put money into Circus Classics which put out the Hanneford Circus that Tommy Hanneford now owns and runs.

Bill provided the solid front end, management staff, concessions, and route. Tommy handled the performance. One thing that ended the Hanneford Circus for Bill was the fact that it was hard to keep repeating towns because most of the acts were house acts. The riding act with Tommy in it was one of the all time great circus acts. However after being in the same city three years in a row people would get up and leave when the riding act came on. Bill put Tommy Hanneford in the circus business and Tommy wouldn't have got there without him! It was during this period that Struppi developed her cage act. First Tommy and her

bought the leopard act from Frank Simpson who provided the cage act for the first couple of circus tours. Then she developed a tiger act.

Fans mix up being a showman and a seller of circus acts! A showman runs a circus, books it, operates it, runs a concession department, knows how to advertise and how to buy advertising time in various medias, promote the circus, rebuilds it each winter, nurses it along, and if need be; eats peanut butter sandwiches all winter to get it out.

Don Smith and Bill English on Sells & Gray.

This has no relation to a person who has a circus and survives by selling the show out to the Shrine or fair boards... believe me. Today there are acts with circuses of their own but most survive by selling dates to fairs, Shrine and other promoters. They cannot book a route of their own of one day stands. Showmen like Bill English could handle all facets of the business and determine their own route and where they wanted to take the show. They knew the economic conditions of each state or province and which shows had been last through the territory.

If Bill said you were going to get paid X amount that was it. You got it, no ands, no buts. You got it every week and on time. This was a big deal if you were on the front end. I billposted for Bill for two seasons and you accumulated a lot of expenses: car, gas, motel, food, paste, tape, and it was a necessity that your money get to you by Friday each week. Bill never failed on this and it was something that I never failed on, too! So many so called show owners couldn't keep a front end going and one simple thing like paying people each week on time was one reason they lost it.

Bill had a dry sense of humor. One day on the Hanneford Circus I went into the men's dressing room to find all ten bundles of my balloons broken. 25 balloons in a bundle You didn't have to be Inspector Maigret to know who did it. For weeks a certain

South American casting act performer had been complaining to me about my blowing up the balloons in the dressing room. He said the air from the balloon blower was giving him a cold! I told Bill what had happened and he said he would take care of it. He did. Come pay day on Sunday when this performer opened his pay envelope he found a broken balloon and a note from Bill simply saying that the show didn't sell enough balloons this week to meet the performing payroll. That ended the beefs from the dressing room about making up concession stock there. Bill was always very careful of dealings with the buildings. Performers today often look at buildings as vacant lots to steal what ever is lying around. It made it hard on other shows

trying to book the building. When I was twenty-four hour man on the show he insisted that I drive back three hundred miles to return an arena moving cart that clown Buck Nolan had stolen.

When Bill decided to get out of the Hanneford Circus his general agent Glenn Parkins put him and Phil Morris together. Morris and Parkins had been friends since their ghost show days in theatres. In 1974 he started booking and promoting Philip Morris' Wonderful World of Fantasy stage shows and continued to do so for 35 years. Bill promoted over 40 weeks of one-night stands using phone promoters he first had with on the Hanneford Circus. What a crew he had! Only someone like Bill could keep them straight. Tom Dilly, a big burly guy was a nephew of George Oliver who had the bill car on the Dailey Bros. Circus. Tom could only be sent into police or Shrine dates where they could stand the heat that his strong-arm tactics created. Whatever room the committee had the phones in Tom turned it into a deli. he carried his own meat shaver, grill, and small fridge. For more refined sponsors Bill would send in ex-flattie-alibi agent Van Dorsen. Van stayed at the best hotels, drove a new Caddy and looked





as suave as any businessman in the town. Van would be in town for a few days and would soon be golfing with the mayor, dining with the police chief. There was never any trouble in his towns. For sponsors that like to have the phone room close to beer--I mean set-up in a VFW's and Legion Hall famed aerialists Clayton Beehee filled the bill. Clayton smoked and drank continuously and happily worked away on the phones. On one occasion he got me drunk on Japanese wine and ended up bailing me out of jail.

For many years the "Queen of the Billers" Jackie Wilcox handled the press and smoothed out any beefs up front. Jackie was one hell of a gal. She was always dressed to the nines and ready to go to dinner. She taught me to lithograph and how to use lithos sticks. She was also one of the best three card monte players I have seen. While others played solitaire Jackie practiced tossing the broads on her motel bed.

When Dory Miller took over the running of Carson and Barnes Circus from Ann Moore in 1969 after Jack Moore died he turned to Bill English to run the front end. Bill was then putting out a large arena magic show produced by Phil Morris, which carried its own stage and lighting. Bill handled the booking and the promoters for both shows plus toured on the magic show as the road manager. He was constantly in a phone booth.

In 1958 a young Jon Friday wrote English for a job as a ticket seller on the Beatty-Cole side show. English's straight forward letter gives you a good insight into circus side shows operations in their last days. English wrote December 2, 1958: "We use two ticket sellers, both of whom are to make second openings, both whom rank equally. The closest thing we have to an assistant manager is the lecturer or inside man. A job of this sort can lead in the managerial direction more easily than an actor's job because it is on the business end of

the show, but it is a starting point only. Many veteran ticket sellers have never advanced or wanted to advance beyond that level. On the other hand Jerry Mugivan and Bert Bowers were both originally ticket sellers.

"Secondly, while it is primarily a white-collar job, where your appearance on the box must be tops (we provide uniform) there is a limited amount of Chinese labor goes with it. Ticket sellers set up and tear down the front, including their ticket boxes and the bally stages.

"The ticket sellers do not however touch any canvas or any part of the show except the front. We have a veteran boss canvasman and an average crew of six men to handle the top and equipment. In addition you would be expected to drive a truck.

"The cookhouse is excellent. Show moves at night and cookhouse is in the air before dawn, serves regular

similar to berth facilities of a rail show.

"Salary is small; just about enough to cover your personal nut: \$25.00 a week. And herein lies the big difficulty. For a skilled and experienced ticket seller, with the volume we handle, this box is worth an additional \$50.00 to \$200.00 a week. To an amateur it might be worth next to nothing. We will be using a 50-cent ticket this season.

"If I were to put you on a ticket box I would be putting you on in place of some old timer who could make a good living on it."

Bill went on to say that he had never written this long a letter to an applicant before but believed Friday could do the job depending on his: "Attitudes, aptitudes, and abilities."

I last saw Bill the second to last Wednesday in February at a care facility on Tuttle in Sarasota. He told me he had lung cancer and was getting radiation. I gave him a copy of my new book and we talked for over a half hour until he became tired. He was just wearing out. He was 86 when he passed away February 26, 2003. As it turned out even in his last few weeks he still had some promoters out there and was working phone dates for a magic show. That's how I knew where he was. He had called Ron Morris' print shop to see if Ron would call one of his promoters because they wouldn't let him call long distance from the care facility.

He told me that his wife Kit (Mary C.) had dementia and for the last two years and hadn't known him. So, his last couple of years had been rough. Sons, John and Billy lived in town. Neither followed Bill into the business. That was left up to his daughter Kathy. When I was a butcher on Sells and Gray in 1964 Kathy was just a young kid making spec in the show. In 1977 she broke in her new trapeze act on my Martin and Downs Circus. She later married performer Oscar Garcia and they now have kids and an indoor circus unit of their own. Bill was proud of them. It was often the first thing

**CIRCUS CLASSICS INCORPORATED**  
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**HANNEFORD**  
**CIRCUS**

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**HANNEFORD CIRCUS OWNED AND OPERATED BY**  
**CIRCUS CLASSICS, INCORPORATED**  
**WILLIAM J. ENGLISH, President**  
**TOMMY HANNEFORD, Vice President**  
**GLENN PARKINS, Vice President**  
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<p><b>WINTER QUARTERS</b> <b>HANNEFORD RANCH</b> Oppey, Florida</p>	<p><b>GENERAL OFFICES</b> Suite 705, Sarasota Bank &amp; Trust Building Sarasota, Florida 33577</p>
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A page from the 1973 Hanneford Circus program, listing English as General Manager and President.

sit-down breakfast at 7:30 A.M. Service is by table waiters and ticket sellers and butchers each pay their table waiter \$2.00 a week tip. You also occupy a regular sleeper berth,



he mentioned in later conversations. The last day I saw him he was concerned about their business and the weak economy.

When I think of Bill English I think of honesty, shrewdness, constant cigarette smoke, and a love of the business that fascinated him to the end. After Bill died I spoke to Phil Morris and Phil said that he had talked to Bill on the phone a few days before Bill's death. Phil asked him if he could get him anything. Bill said: "Hell no, I'm dying, cigarettes you know but no use crying over spilt milk." I feel that if at age 20 someone had handed Bill a couple of million he would have still chosen a circus career along the same lines as he had done it.

Bill was lucky to have come into the business in some of its better days. In recent years he lamented how much the business had changed for the worse and that it's coverage now boiled down to silly fan reports in the *Circus Report*. A business now run by a lot of First of Mays that still can't make it to June 1st. He lamented the fact that the business had

shrunk to where it couldn't support a trade paper. In Bill's words: "Now days a gymnasium show can carry a few performers who double concessions, one clown, taped music, and still call itself a circus."

"While I am pleased that my daughter and family are successful in their show business endeavors, I have a tinge of regret at what live show business has deteriorated to. The big theme parks show creative imagination in framing and presenting a variety of shows rather than depending solely on rides. Without these shows, both live and mechanical they would lose a lot of their drawing power and obviously they know it. They have one big advantage--they don't travel. The same holds true for Las Vegas. A costly production can stay in one place for months or even years without traveling because a new audience is continually coming in . . . in other words. . . the audience does the traveling."

"Of course I realize why shows have disappeared from carnival midways and why side shows on circuses are a thing of the past. However, I

recall fondly standing on the bally before a packed midway when I had the side show on Beatty 1960 and 1961, having all those suckers hanging on your every word gave you a sense of power and when you turned the tip and they surged on the ticket sellers it was sure thrilling. On big days in Philadelphia, Atlantic City and Bridgeport I ran 7,000 to 9,000 people through the side show at fifty cents. Of course on those big days we opened at 11 in the morning and closed after the big show blow off at night. Performers and ticket sellers went to the cook house in rotation. Those were the days when the big show was doing turnaways and giving three or more performances a day."

Bill will be well remembered by his friends and business associates. He taught Charlie Boas, Jim Nordmark, Glenn Parkins, myself and dozens of others a lot about show business. He was my generation's Zack Terrell, Floyd King. Our hero. It going to seem strange to no longer here that gravelly "hello--this is Bill English" on the other end of the phone.

# Season's Greetings

CHILDRESS SHOWS, INC. PRESENTS

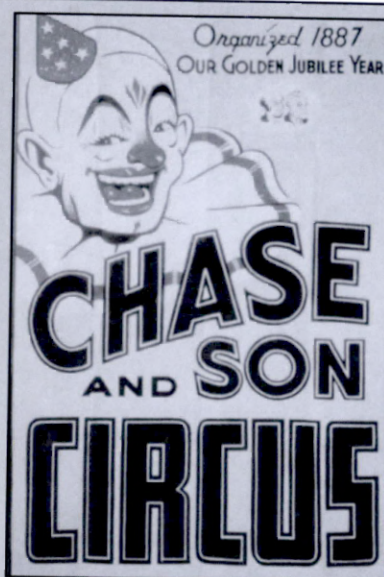


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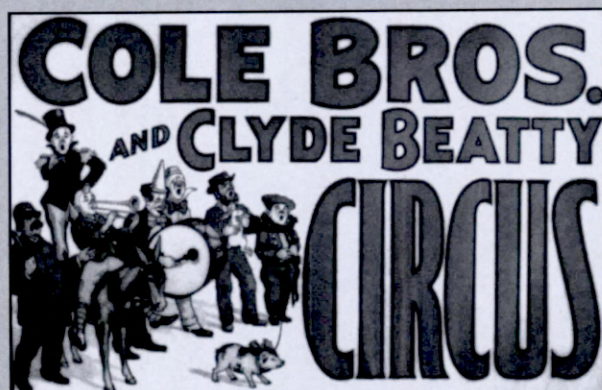
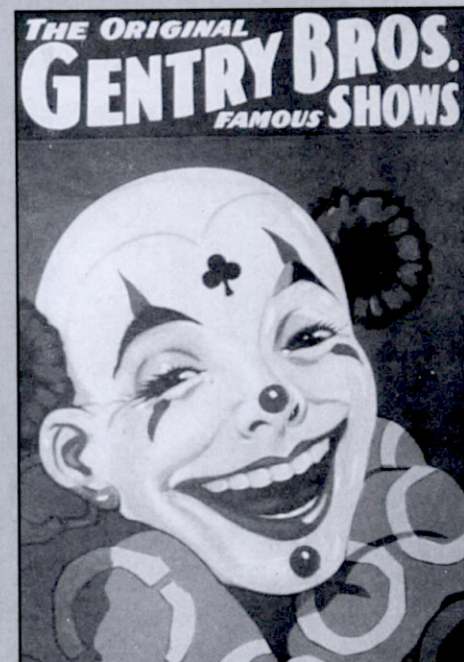


# Clown Lithos

A circus is not a circus without clowns.  
And circuses used lots of clown posters.











**AS A CIRCUS ENTHUSIAST, YOU KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF SUPPORTING THE CIRCUS INDUSTRY THROUGH YOUR ATTENDANCE AT PERFORMANCES. OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE IS THE PRESERVATION OF AMERICAN CIRCUS HERITAGE. THAT'S WHAT WE DO AT CIRCUS WORLD MUSEUM.**

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# Bill Kasiska's Letterheads

THE BIG SHOW OF THE WORLD.



## SELLS BROTHERS ENORMOUS UNITED SHOWS.

MAGNIFICENT THREE RING CIRCUS, FIVE CONTINENT MENAGERIE, HUGE ELEVATED STAGES, AUSTRALIAN AVIARY, AFRICAN AQUARIUM, ROMAN HIPPODROME, SPECTACULAR PAGEANTS, ARABIAN CARAVAN & TRANS-PACIFIC WILD BEAST EXHIBIT. THE LONGEST ESTABLISHED, THE BEST RECORD, A CLEAN, FIRST CLASS, MORAL & UNPARALLELED COMBINATION, EMBRACING THE BEST PERFORMANCES, LARGEST MENAGERIE, MOST BRILLIANT PAGEANTS AND CONDUCTED ON BETTER LINES THAN ANY OTHER TENTED EXHIBITION IN AMERICA.

Columbus, O. November 7th, 1895. 189

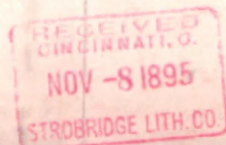
The Strobridge Lithograph Company,  
Cincinnati, O.  
Gentlemen:

Will you please make out a statement of our account and send it here at your earliest convenience. The bills that remain in your establishment and which will be carried over for next season's work should not be charged in this year's account. Only the bills that have been shipped out, as there will in all probability be a change in our firm next year, and the old firm will, of course, pay for the bills that have been used, and the new firm for those that are on hand.

I am now living in my new home, and should either Mr. Stewart or Mr. Nelson, or any of my friends in the Strobridge Company visit Columbus, I shall be pleased to entertain them. My address is 755 Dennison Avenue. I shall not be home much of the time until after the show closes the season and returns here, but any letters or messages that are sent here will be forwarded to me.

Yours very truly,

*Peter Sells*



This 1895 Sells Brothers Enormous United Shows letterhead is one of the most colorful stationery designs used by the original show. Note that it is signed by Peter Sells.



# CIRCUS CELEBRATION 2004



Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus Band, Chicago, 1947, collection of the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art

## Extraordinary Extravaganza

**All day, Saturday, January 24, Ringling Museum**

Advance tickets recommended. Call (941) 358-3180

### ***Circus Spectacular! Family Festival, 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM***

Ladies and gentlemen, children of *aaalll* ages, an all day spectacle of sight and sound awaits you... internationally known performers from Circus Sarasota will astound and amaze you with great feats of strength, agility and humor. Don't miss your opportunity to clown around.

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Be mesmerized by the magnificent melodies of the golden age of the circus with the annual Windjammers concert.

### **Circus Celebrity Night**

Join us for this event that honors American circus greats of the past and present.

### **On-going exhibitions at the Circus Museum**

Don't miss *The Greatest Show on Earth*, an exhibition in honor of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this Academy Award winning film.



THE JOHN AND MABLE  
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The State Art Museum of Florida  
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# ELOISE BERCHTOLD'S LAST PERFORMANCE

By Giovanni Iuliani

*This paper was presented at the 2002 Circus Historical Society convention in Toronto, Ontario, Canada.*

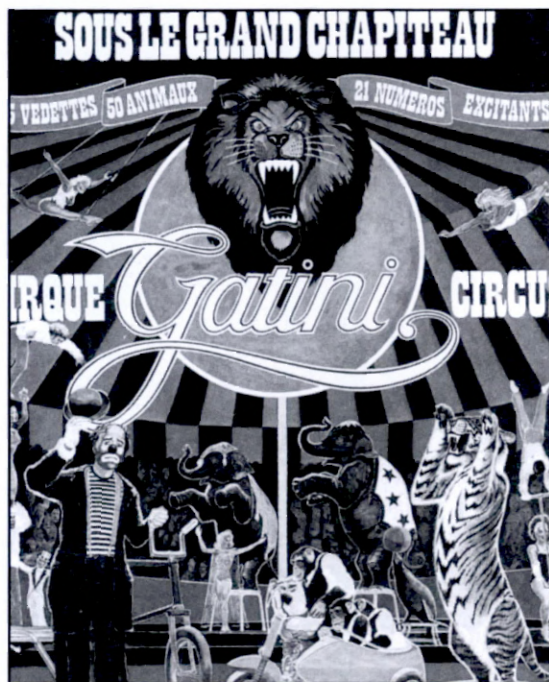
In 1976, Michel Gatién, the general manager for Spectacular Amusements, convinced Claude Dubois, the owner of the carnival company, to present circus acts at Quebec fairs. Le Monde Merveilleux du Cirque (The Wonderful World of the Circus) was very popular. However, it was the acquaintance he made with Jay Troy, a circus performer, that persuaded him to start his own circus.

Tales of mud shows being very profitable during WW II didn't fall on deaf ears. Michel Gatién sought the aid of Gee Gee Engesser, who knew capable people, who could help him put together the new show. As for the title of Gatini, this was chosen because of the success he achieved

Eloise Berchtold as pictured in the Gatiani program. All illustrations are from the author's collection.

during the 1950's, selling headbands to beauty parlors during the "Madame Pompadour" hair craze.

A major attribute in the tremendous success of the first season of Gatini Circus was due to Michel Gatién's brother, Jacques (James) Gatién who owned Atlantic Promotions, a company that specialized in selling products such as magic sweeping brooms, self-drying mops, etc. The products were sold in major outlets throughout the province of Quebec and the Maritimes. What made Atlantic Promotions successful was an advertising blitz on late night television. Sharing part of the advertisement schedule with Gatini Circus meant that his brother could afford



The cover of the Cirque Gatini program.

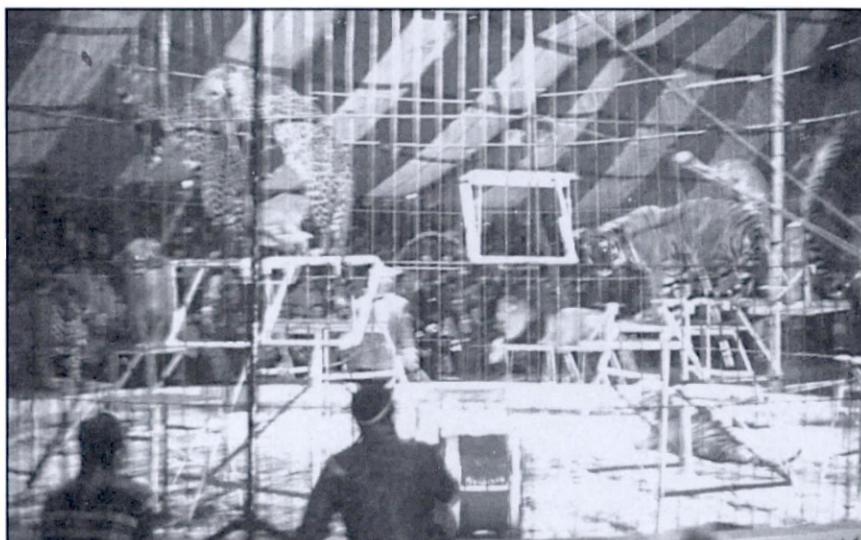


to utilize the TV medium to his advantage..

The 1977 season brought unexpected profits that indicated that if this was the result of touring only the Province of Quebec, the Maritimes would yield twice as much. The decision was then made to create a second Gatini Circus, especially for Eastern Canada. While all the original circus performers would return for a second season they would open the Maritimes circus, meanwhile a bigger show would tour Quebec.

Gee Gee Engesser was again Artistic Advisor and provided circus acts for the two units. Many of the performers were world renown such as the Zamperlas, the Bertinis, Bisbinis and others. It also meant that other great circus stars, like the Christianis and the Fosset's, to name



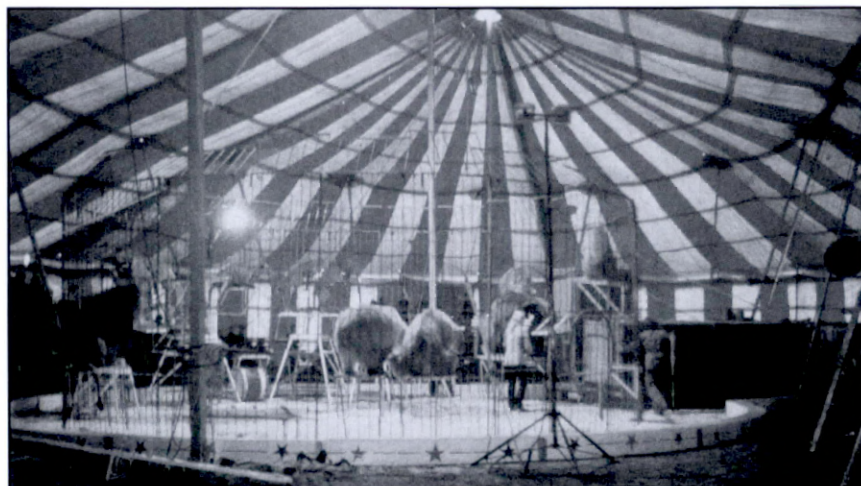


Eloise Berchtold working her wild animal act.

a few, would all be feature acts with Gatini Circus now becoming a major circus organization whose rapid rise was quickly making it one of the five biggest circuses in North America.

Gatini Circus, with its stylized lion logo needed a cage act so as to put it in the major leagues. Gee Gee Engesser found a wild animal act that would surpass other cat acts. It was in essence the kind of act that Alfred Court presented on the Ringling show during the war years. The act in question was to have tigers, lions and even bears. Over 14 animals inside a steel arena performing "Peace In The Jungle" under animal trainer Eloise Berchtold. What was even more outstanding was that

Another view of the wild animal act on Gatini.



Ms. Berchtold also presented "The Tuskers of Thailand" consisting of three male elephants. There simply were no comparisons between Gee Gee Engesser's Cossack Elephants and her Liberty Ponies.

The first of May was the beginning of Quebec's Gatini Circus' second season with an opening performance in Coaticook, a rail junction city located in the Eastern Townships. What made this opening date memorable was the 4 inches of snow that covered the ground. Eloise Berchtold arrived the previous night from Woodland, Washington after a long cross-country trek. Fortunately, we managed to have access to the arena where she sheltered all her animals.

The first show was an hour late but the public was patient and well amused by the pranks of clown John Daly, Jr. The delay was caused by the enormous difficulty wheeling the animal cages from the arena to the

tent. Plywood boards were laid down on a soggy soil and had to lead in two directions towards the big steel cage. Once the show got started the public witnessed one of the greatest animal acts ever presented. Eloise Berchtold had toiled many months putting together this act and believed it would make her a headline attraction in major size circuses throughout the world. Assembling the various species of cats took a long time, especially when some of them never worked before the public. Then came the most unusual mixture of wild animals ever, that of introducing bears among them. That is why she needed two animal chutes. As a precautionary measure she also had a couple who would spoon feed the two bears while she was busy making the cats run through their routines. As for the cage, it was a remnant of a time where the fear of wild animals meant building enormous steel cages more suited for permanent installation than those you put up-and-down two or three times a day.

Magog was the second city listed on our tour. Either because we were too close to Sherbrooke or the public failed to realize we had an entirely new show, they failed to come and we lost money playing that town. Next on our list was Sherbrooke, the biggest city in the Eastern Townships. However, the circus lot was located in Rock Forest which was a stone throw away just across a bridge that connected the two cities.

The show left Magog at daybreak and drove straight through to Rock Forest arriving at a very early hour at the shopping center. Manual Ruffin, Jr. was the tent boss and his crew got busy setting up the tent. Meanwhile, performers parked their trucks and trailers and laid out hoses and electrical cords. The first show was scheduled to start at 6:30 p.m. which meant every body had time for themselves.

Eloise Berchtold was having trouble with her elephants and feared that one of them was going into musk. Since the beginning she kept Tonga inside the trailer and managed to work Teak and Thai who were more manageable. She also made many phone calls to her part-



ner Morgan Berry, rumor had it that he insisted she return to Woodland, but other more important reasons kept her going. She knew her animals and was convinced that she would overcome whatever problems that came along.

Claude Bordez, Gatini publicity man and animal expert having owned a private zoo in France, was fascinated by Eloise Berchtold's cage act and felt that this was the most difficult problem she had to face. It never dawned on him that the elephants that were causing her the most trouble.

The 6:30 Friday night show drew a crowd of 615 people but we all hoped that the 9:30 show would be full. The cat act went a lot quicker than the first time. Then it happened. Eloise tripped on a bulge in the rubber matt and nearly failed. Otherwise the "Peace In The Jungle" caged animal act went along smoothly. All the other acts that followed had no problems until intermission. That is when Napoleon Zamperla complained about the poor condition of the center ring and asked that something be done about the rubber matt that had a bulge right in the center.

Manuel Ruffin, Jr., the tent boss, was also replacing Jorge Rosell, the prop boss, who was playing some western dates before returning to Gatini Circus requested a half hour time so that the prop crew could remove the rubber matt and then put it back the proper way. The public never noticed that the intermission was a little longer than usual and the second half started with the acts succeeding one another at a smooth pace until Napoleon Zamperla came around and inspected the center ring. He noticed that the rubber matt still had a bulge, only now; it was at a different location. He couldn't risk sending his horse out there and cancelled the act. This meant alerting Eloise Berchtold to get ready ahead of time. The Bettina's where at the backdoor when the juggler finished his act. Skipping the Zamperla's equestrian act, the Bertini's entered



Teak on the ground dead after being shot.

the ring and climbed to the top of the tent performing a suspended perch act. While the act was going on, Eloise Berchtold had already gotten out of her jumpsuit and was leading Teak and Thai towards the big top. She entered the tent with the two male elephants in tow just as the Bertini's left the ring.

As the mastodons made a fast turn around the ring they each went towards the two tubs. Eloise Berchtold was facing Teak and as she backed up she tripped on the bump in the rubber matt and fell flat on her face. Quickly, she turns over on her back but before she can get back on her feet Teak plunges his head towards her.

"Get him off! Get him off!" are the last words she cried out, declares Gilles Frechette, the show drummer. But already it was too late. Teak had struck with lightning speed and as he raised his head Eloise was gored with his left tusk. Teak was shaking his head while the body of Eloise Berchtold held onto the tusk as if a rag doll who's lifeless limbs moved grotesquely until he managed to let her slide off. As she lay on the ground Teak hit her with his trunk as if to awaken her. It happened so quickly that the public barely realized what happened.

Pierre Jean, the ringmaster, was ill prepared for such an event. Looking in disbelief at the horrible scene before him he saw Thai, the other elephant, looking straight at him. Fearing the worst he held on to the

mike and ripped the wire cord as he ran outside the tent. Thai also wasted no time and ran in the opposite direction in between two seat sections and lifted the sidewall with his trunk and disappeared into the night. Standing next to the ringmaster when Berchtold was killed by Teak, Giovanni Iuliani immediately grabbed the mike used to amplify the drums and ordered an

evacuation of the big top in an orderly fashion. Within minutes everybody in the audience was out of the tent avoiding a panic altogether.

During the evacuation Richard Rosio, the bandleader, was courageous enough to confront the killer elephant in the center ring. He bravely gave orders to Teak who responded to his commands.

The young couple who had assisted Berchtold witnessed her unfortunate demise. It was for them the first time they saw the show as spectators before returning to the U.S. As they hurried, with the crowd out of the tent they were seen by Giovanni Iuliani, the performance director, who was heading towards his trailer to retrieve a 35mm, camera. Returning inside the big top he positioned himself behind a seat wagon and aimed the camera towards the center ring and focused on Richard Rosio who kept Teak at bay.

"Give me foot. Teak give me foot. Good boy." The musical director knew very little insofar as elephant commands but he felt that as long as he kept the beast busy he could control him until help arrived.

Frenchie, the concession operator, removed his jacket and covered Eloise as she lay inside the ring close to the curb side. Every time they tried to move her the elephant would stride forward. A plywood board was propped up which hid her from Teak. The elephant was very nervous and wouldn't stay in place. At one moment he grabbed a sledgehammer with its trunk and lifted it above its





head. Poor Richard Rosio thought it was his last hour but Teak used it to scratch his back. After a few moments the elephant gently deposited the sledgehammer and continued his obedience to the musical director's commands.

Sergeant Richard Tremblay arrived, and as Teak turned his back towards Berchtold, who was hidden behind the plywood sheet, quickly grabbed her and ran with her body in his arms towards the ambulance attendants. He deposited the victim on a gurney and they rushed her out of the big top. Meanwhile, a fanatic effort was being made to find the couple who had assisted Berchtold. They knew the phone number of Morgan Berry, her partner. Leo Duplessis, the circus manager asked Giovanni Iuliani to find them. Remembering having seen them at the circus he thought they might be living at a nearby motel. As luck would have it and after a few inquiries he succeeded in finding them.

Morgan Berry's farm was in an isolated area at a place known as Woodland, Washington. At the time of the call he was just sitting down getting ready for dinner when the bad news was brought to his attention.

"What do we do about the killer elephant Mr. Berry?" Asked the circus manager.

"Nobody wants a elephant that kills a Mahout. If the zoo can take

Teak being removed from the tent by a wrecker truck.

him alive they can have it. Otherwise (sob) kill the bastard!" Replied Morgan Berry upset over the lost of a precious friend.

Two veterinary doctors who treated farm, animals and also did some work at the Granby Zoo were brought over in a Surete du Quebec police car to the circus in an attempt to capture Teak. Bringing him back alive would make the killer elephant a prize attraction at the zoo, must of thought the doctor as he loader his rifle with M-99, a drug for the purpose of putting to sleep wild animals. However, the dosage had to be exact as well as shot in a specific area that would maximize its effect. Otherwise it would take from 15 to 30 minutes before the animal would fall asleep. Unfortunately, Teak failed to fall asleep and instead prepared to charge in the direction where the shot came from. Fearing his fury two marks men opened fire and a volley of bullets hit their mark. A third officer also was on hand and together 16 bullets brought down the beast.

Thai, the frightened elephant hid in bushes surrounded by bungalows whose inhabitants were spending a very restless night. He was not a killer elephant and it was only a matter of time before Morgan Berry would come and fetch him.

At daybreak the circus tow truck pulled the dead carcass of Teak out-

side the tent where another truck would heave the elephant on its platform. The press was witness to this maneuver and pictures were printed in major newspapers showing Teak having his tusk sawed off.

It was around noon that Morgan Berry, after arriving on a Chicago flight at Dorval airport in Montreal, was taken aboard a Provincial police helicopter and flown directly to the Rock Forest Shopping Mall. Passing through a barrage of journalists he succeeded in boarding a patrol car, which rushed him towards where the elephant was hiding. Within a few minutes he came out of the bush with Thai and after boarding the semi-trailer returned to Gatini Circus.

A coroner's inquest concluded that the death of Eloise Berchtold was accidental. Incidentally, there was also mention of the rubber matt.

Berry drove back to Woodland with the animals and Eloise Berchtold was cremated. Alas, the airline company lost the parcel and it took a few weeks to find her remains in a hangar. Morgan Berry spread her remains at the Woodland farm.

In 1989 Randall Jay Moore and Christopher Munnion wrote *Back To Africa* published by Southern Book Publishers in Johannesburg, South Africa. The circus tragedy at Rock Forest was told as if the local inhabitants where living in a desolated area summellerie on the wild frontier. People carry rifles in the back of their trucks and the Mounted Police is the only law that existed. While Randal Jay Moore never worked on Gatini Circus he nonetheless succeeded in obtaining the male African elephants on the Berry farm and with the financial assistance of a major American television network, returned the elephants to Africa. These arrangements where made after the death of Morgan Berry who was found dead killed presumably by Budda, a male elephant, at his farm.

Giovanni Iuliani is co-author with Claude Bordez of *Dernier Tour de Piste* that covers the last performance of Eloise Berchtold. The book also covers animal training and brings pro-animal circus arguments in response to animal activist movements. Published by JCL, a French-Canadian publishing house. Not available in English.



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# STAR BACK REVIEW

Janet M. Davis. *The Circus Age: Culture and Society Under the American Big Top*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2002.

"No other amusement saturated consumers like the circus at the turn of the century."

This work examines the American circus during its heyday at the turn of the twentieth century. In 1903, a record 98 circuses and menageries crisscrossed the United States, with 38 traveling by rail. The country was becoming "an anonymous, modern, urban, industrial society," rather than a collection of what historian Robert Wiebe characterized as "loosely connected islands." It also was an anxious time of panics, depressions, labor strikes, racism, social Darwinism, and empire building. After the market crash of 1873, business failures climbed as high as 95 per cent. Government and industry cooperated as the new promotional state aggressively sought global markets. In this milieu, Davis finds the circus mirroring the growth and development of the country. She uses the circus, which came to every American's door-step, to explore the politics of inclusion and exclusion, the interplay between local, national and global interests, and attitudes about gender, race, labor, sexuality, monopoly formation, nationalism and empire. Although the circus and Wild West show seemed to have normative approaches to the narratives of civilization, progress and nostalgia, Davis discovers contradictory cultural aspects in the performances. The circus was a "jarring mix of the real and the pointedly unnatural," and an "interactive cultural arena" where a "spectacular conversation of sorts" occurred between "performers, workers, animals, the elements and the audience." In Chapter 2, the author

advises readers they can avoid the discussion of culture theory by skipping ahead to the next chapter. This, I feel would be unwise since in subsequent chapters, culture theory is far more intertwined with the narrative.

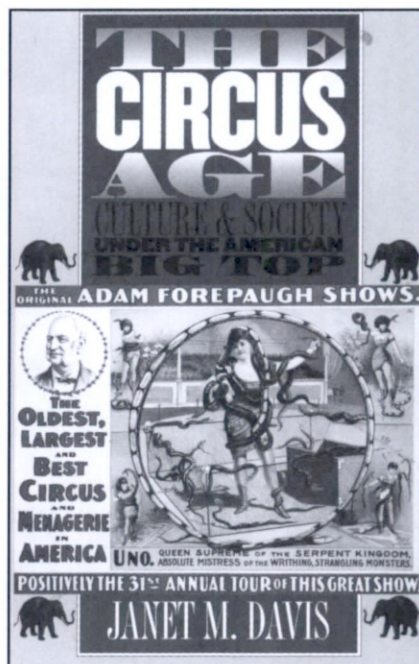
Most individuals interested in circus history will be familiar with the nature of the circus at the turn of the century as discussed by Davis, but a review of what she believes are the most distinguishing features will set the stage for her observations.

The circus had rapidly increased in size as railroads expanded across the nation following the Civil War. Shows could travel quickly, covering more territory and had the ability to transport heavy equipment, large groups of animals, performers and laborers, which made the three-ring circus possible. Audiences, meanwhile, had changed from the largely male spectators attending the antebellum circus, to ones composed of families. Children usually gained their first

exposure to the "exotic other" at the circus. Advertisements and publicity stressed the great moral lessons children could gain "about courage, discipline, and bodily fortitude." Circus day became a major community event, beginning in the early morning with the arrival of the circus train, followed by the setup, parade, performance, and teardown.

Circus owners were very much part of the Gilded Age. Enterprising impresarios, they devised a wide array of tactics to defeat the competition. Circuses led the way in mass saturation advertising, in imaginative publicity campaigns, and in smear tactics against the opposition. They depended on a big workforce of young, strong male laborers to set up and move the show every day. This disciplined workforce was crammed into railroad cars and faced more daily hazards than the most daring performer, yet they were seen as expendable by the owners, and ignored by the emergent labor movement because of their unskilled status and itinerant nature. They had little recourse for grievances, except to quit, if they were not fired first. Thus, the large railroad circus became a mobile company town. Management devised strict rules of conduct for performers and laborers. Although the circus often boasted of employing all races and nationalities it operated according to a strict hierarchy and caste system. The circus workforce expressed a segregated yet coherent company town culture. The day-to-day circus operations of rapid transportation, set-up, and feeding large groups of people and animals reflect Taylorism, and had become so efficient, that the military routinely studied and praised the techniques.

The circus increasingly featured female performers. In an era of Victorian standards generally disapproving of the display of scantily clad





women (not to mention men in tights), the circus managed to cleverly avoid the ire and condemnation of reformers. It also was quick in cashing in on national pride and patriotism. After the Spanish-American War, circuses and Wild West shows concocted elaborate production numbers or "specs," that focused on America's growing international power and military strength.

Davis first turns her attention to the show owners, who shared the beliefs, values, and material practices of corporate management of the era, such as attempting to attain great size and a monopoly position. Their favorite narrative became the "rags-to-riches" story of individuals rising through hard work and self-discipline. Barnum, for example, stressed individual initiative, sobriety, human perfectibility and self-discipline all through his life. Jimmy McGinnis, who would later adopt the name James A. Bailey, actually had a Dickensian childhood, abused by his violent siblings until he ran away from home at the age of eleven. Brilliant in his attention to details and devising many of the techniques needed to move a large three ring circus, Bailey had an autocratic demeanor, and actually dreamed of producing a one-ring, urban, very plush, very expensive circus that would price out the pushing crowds. Buffalo Bill Cody was also a complicated personality; although he espoused romantic heroism, adventure, and upward mobility, he was a strong believer in American Indian cultural diversity and gender equality, advocating women's suffrage and the rights of working women. The Ringling Brothers stressed self-discipline, individual mobility, and family ethos, although, as Davis points out all these men "ballyhooed excess."

Perhaps, the strongest, most interesting chapter deals with the role of circus women. In the circus, women exhibited impressive feats of strength and power, which Davis calls "startlingly alternative" to contemporary social mores. Nudity, a social construct, was made "respectable" rather than salacious. In fact, women, disproportionate to



An illustration from the Davis book.

their actual number as featured performers, were heavily advertised and used by circus owners to sell their productions as decent family entertainment. Davis believes this phenomenon was made possible by a number of factors, including the growing number of working women, many of whom attended the shows, increasing popular references to sexuality, and the blossoming physical culture movement that was praised by factory owners since it led to healthier, more productive workers. Women's physical activity, advocates insisted, was critical to moral, physical and even "racial" well-being, since strong, healthy women could bear larger families.

Unlike the owners and male per-

Albert Hodgini as "The Original Miss Daisy."



formers, circus women never were publicized as having run away to join the circus. Instead, these well-bred heroines were said to be always traveling under the watchful and protective eyes of parents, brothers or husbands. Usually they were described as members of an old distinguished European circus family since circuses were considered high class in Europe

and often performed before royalty. If they were not married, they were certainly engaged, since marriages—even staged ones between animals—were a favorite circus publicity ploy. Their scant costuming was justified since it allowed them to engage in healthy, wholesome athletic pursuits without the danger of more enveloping clothing.

Davis then examines other uses of women in the circus that do not follow this scenario. Ballet girls often were depicted in more promiscuous, exotic roles, for example as harem girls that corresponded to popular film stars like Theda Bara (an anagram for Arab Death). Men were occasionally costumed and marketed as women, which necessitated them comporting themselves according to the same rules of behavior as women stars. Side show women came under another standard, since animality, and non-whiteness, allowed more allusions to sexuality, such as romantically linking the Fat Lady with the Human Skeleton. Women of color were represented as primitive or missing links, engaging in physical labor (civilized women did not toil), sexual promiscuity, and even cannibalism.

Even though the marketing of women was filled with contradictions ranging from titillation to properness, the circus managed to avoid the progressive reformers' slings and arrows that were directed at saloons, dance halls, movie theaters, skating rinks and even ice cream parlors. Davis finds the reason the circus escaped censure difficult to answer, except that it offered a "world without consequences," with no permanent ties to a community. Male performers, on the other hand, were



largely excluded from publicity campaigns at the turn of the century. If they were written about, their background, class and marital status were seldom mentioned. Circuses, Davis feels, had little reason to justify their presence. Male animal trainers were depicted as reserved, stoic in regard to pain, infinitely patient, and disciplined in an almost paramilitary manner. Their role reflected the white man's burden.



An illustration from the Davis book.

Circus boy fiction, however, was very popular. Maltreated orphans ran away, joined the nonjudgmental circus, and rose from common laborer to star or show owner because of their honesty, discipline, thrift and physical fortitude.

Yet, the circus also engaged in male gender flux with "androgynous acrobats, genderbending clowns, and animals dressed as men." Homosexuals were thought of as less of a threat at the turn of the century, and tolerated as a third sex. Clowns often represented the male body in physical decline and could express emotions such as childishness not associated with male norms. Davis finds most interesting, the free display of the male body in action offered to the public by the labor force. They put on an amazing show of muscular physical labor and youthful strength in crews divided by race. Their presence, which helped incense the charged atmosphere of circus day, often led to fights between workers, with townspeople, and among the towners themselves.

The turn-of-the-century circus following the Spanish-American War began to stress the moral, political and economic dominance of the United States in world affairs. Extravagant, extensive, didactic reenactments of battles and diplomatic successes were produced as educationally uplifting spectacles. The circus and Wild West show became, according to Davis, "Moral cheerleaders of expansionism." The Civil War and Mexican War had never been the grist of these presentations since their interpretation varied by region, but the victory of the Rough Riders was ideal fodder, as

were Columbus' discovery of America, which "ignited the engine of American Progress," the Indian wars, Custer's Last Stand, and the acquisition of the Canal Zone. In 1903, Barnum & Bailey gained government sanction to exhibit large official scale models of U.S. warships.

Anti-imperialism did gain a strong voice however, insisting globalism would lead constitutional, cultural, and racial demise. The horror of World War I would bring an end to these recreations and specs would feature more "orientalist" themes.

At the conclusion of this book, it is evident that Davis has been won over to the amazing phenomenon that the circus was and its influence on American culture. It was an agent of global representation, a mobile corporation demonstrating the new industrial order; it trumpeted the growing power of the U.S. and brought us into a new age. The circus offered a complicated, often unsettling message of conformity and liberalism placed as it was at the center of the crossroads of Victorianism and the modern. It was nostalgic, roman-

tic, subversive and even post-modern in its stream of consciousness presentations.

Davis argues it set the stage for modern consumerism with its advertising techniques and "frenetic placelessness" that presaged the mass media. It led the way for mass consumer culture by presenting a show that produced "sensory overload," so that customers would return again and again since they had never really

seen the whole thing. Theme parks, tourist destinations, malls, ethnic restaurants, and Las Vegas all follow the circus's legacy: "explore the exotic through an act of consumption."

Janet Davis has written an important contribution to circus history. The cultural analysis may lead other scholars and researchers to more in-depth works on non-media popular entertainment. If this isn't recommendation enough, *The Circus Age*, also has excellent illustrations and more importantly over 75 pages of notes that should whet any researcher's curiosity. Joanne Joys

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# Youth Circus Today

By Robert Sugarman

*This paper was presented at the 2003 Circus Historical Society convention in Peru, Indiana.*

Peru, Indiana is the perfect venue for looking at youth circus because we are day and dating with the Peru Amateur Circus—one of the oldest. It started in 1960 and is the largest youth circus in this country—if not in the world. The Peru Amateur Circus developed in a city that was home to many retired and off season circus performers because Peru was, of course, the home of the American Circus Corporation. The Peru Amateur Circus program contains a good history of the community's circus past.

The youth circus here is a *community* circus, which is one category of youth circus. In many ways, I think, it is the best model because young people grow up in an environment where mastering circus skills is the norm. Youngsters in Peru don't have to run off to join the circus as in the old days, nor do they have to run off to circus camp or a summer youth circus, which, as we shall see, are the paths to circus for many young people today. Young people who live where there is no community circus have to develop an interest in circus on their own which isn't easy. Here it's what many youngsters do and what many adults mentor and support.

Any child who attends a Peru school is eligible to participate. Although retired professionals no longer teach as they did in 1960, those who have learned from them and from those who learned from them now pass on the skills.

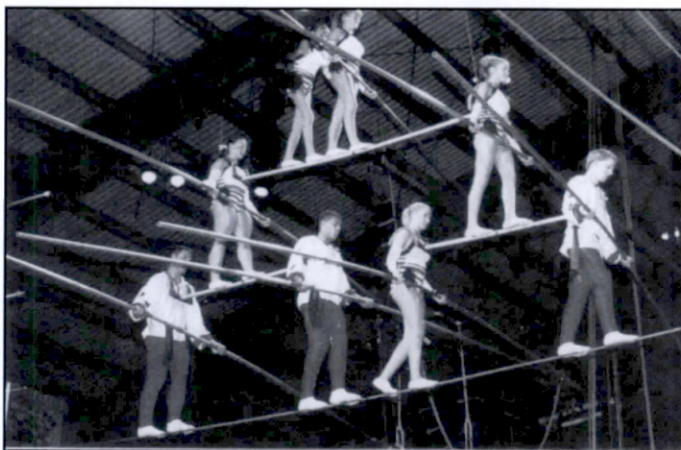
There are ten trainers, thirty to forty riggers, two producers, three ringmasters, one hundred and five band members—not all play at once. In 2001 there were 25 Kiddie Clowns, six Junior Clowns and 13 adult clowns. A crew of eight pro-

duces more than 500 costumes. There is an eighteen member governing board and many support personnel. The two paid employees are the Circus City Festival Office Manager and the Head Trainer.

For almost all the participants, this is a volunteer community activity.

The skill level shown at the Peru Amateur Circus ranges from that of the Kiddie Clowns and the Beginning Tumblers to that of those who have mastered the seven high and even the eight high pyramid on the high wire and advanced feats on the flying trapeze. Groups from the Peru Amateur Circus have been prizewinners in Monaco—the eight

The Fern Street Circus is a community based circus in San Diego. Fern Street Circus photo.



Eight High Pyramid on the high wire by the Young Americans of the Peru Amateur Circus at the Circus City Festival. Circus City Festival photo.

high made it into the *Guinness Book of Records*. Along with mastering circus skills, participants acquire elements of what I call Circus Learning: non-competitive cooperation, getting on healthy terms with their bodies, and developing the self knowledge and self esteem that come from mastering difficult things and presenting them to an audience. Or as the Peru Amateur Circus Mission Statement reads, "To develop self worth, poise, responsibility, self-esteem, spirit of teamwork and lasting friendships through the medium of circus."

The Peru Amateur Circus has a unique flavor, which resembles many Middle American athletic events. There is a Circus King and a Circus Queen as at a High School prom and a great deal of home town boosterism which is not surprising as the circus is the centerpiece of the community wide Circus City Festival.

The Peru Amateur Circus, now presented in its own permanent building, resembles the traditional American circus with three rings of dazzling activity and a large brass band. Although each edition of the Peru Amateur Circus has a theme,







The cast of the Hilltop Circus performance at the Pine Hill Waldorf School in Wilton, New Hampshire. Hilltop Circus photo.

the theme applies mostly to costuming and music. The show, unlike the New American Circuses--Big Apple, Flora, etc.--contains acts that are thematically unrelated.

Sarasota, Florida's Sailor Circus is a similar community circus that developed in a venue where circuses wintered and performers lived during their careers and after they retired. The Sailor Circus started in 1950 as an outdoor performance that was part of the high school gymnastics program. It eventually moved into its own permanent big top where it now exists as an independent entity. It has demanding standards of behavior, dress and attendance at rehearsals that are set forth in a formidable rulebook. As at the Peru Circus, a high degree of technical skill is achieved and both shows share the enthusiastic glow of an Up with People performance making clear that these are exemplary young people who, through skill, commitment and good living, have mastered skills they are eager to share with audiences. Sailor Circus performances are accompanied by live music presented by the Windjammers Unlimited. Many of the musicians have retired to Sarasota from important music positions around the country.

This is not the only model for a community circus. The Peru Amateur Circus and the Sailor Circus are based on the traditional American circus, which was in intent, if not always in practice, a money making

venture that brought live performance to all of the country. It was especially significant in the hinterlands where its visions of distant worlds and unusual skills brought flashes of color to a world in which most cars were black and photography was black and white.

The New Circus--that we know in its high end manifestations in Cirque du Soleil and

Big Apple--developed from a movement started in the 1970's by pioneers like Reg Bolton in England who saw circus training as a way to implement social service programs that would teach young people, especially those in need, important life skills. The founders of Big Apple and Cirque du Soleil were counter-culture street performers in the 1970's. The first fund appeals by Big Apple spoke of that circus as giving voice to parts of the New York community that lay beyond traditional arts organizations. Over the years the community involvement of Big Apple has diminished. Street people no longer make it into the Big Apple big top as they did in the first years with the wonderful Backstreet Flyers. The Big Apple Circus now showcases the finest acts from around the world and there is a profound disconnect between New York City's racial and ethnic diversity and Big Apple performances. Big Apple does its Beyond the Ring™ residency program in a few schools and its Clown Care Unit™ works in hospitals, but a strong case can be made that both serve more to enable the Big Apple Circus to maintain its not-for-profit status as an educational entity than to serve the community. As it has evolved, the tail seems to be wagging the dog. Cirque du Soleil, on the other hand, while charging prices that limit its clientele to the carriage trade, continues to pay homage to its roots in the streets by devoting

approximately one per cent of its considerable income to its Cirque du Monde program that partners with local social service agencies to work with at risk kids around the world.

So we come to a different kind of community circus that developed from the New Circus movement which focuses not just on one ring and a theme, but on a sense of social responsibility. These programs don't just work with exemplary young people, but with all kinds of young people from all kinds of backgrounds.

The small Fern Street Circus in San Diego, California doesn't have its own building. Fern Street is based in a small community center and its shows are funky, New Circus style presentations.



Reg Bolton pioneered youth circuses in England and Australia. Author's collection.

John Highkin, Fern Street's director, sees youth as part of a larger community and he integrates young people and adults in his shows. Although based at a community center, the youngsters involved are economically integrated. A number of home schooling middle class parents get their children involved. There is racial and ethnic integration, which extends to the specially commissioned live music that combines Hispanic, rock and any other elements that fit that year's theme. The circus performs in one ring that is normally set up out of doors before a backdrop.

Jessica Hentoff, a veteran of Big Apple's first year who now operates circus programs in St. Louis, recently established the Circus Day Foundation to bring young people from various ethnic and religious groups in St. Louis together through circus. This year she worked successfully with a troupe of Jewish and Muslim youngsters and hopes to extend the work to other groups in the community.

This model of youth circus as a force to overcome community ethnic, racial and religious divisions has developed in many places. Since 1985 the Belfast Community Circus in



Northern Ireland has brought Catholic and Protestant children together in programs they have presented throughout their divided city. A number of their graduates have gone on to be professional instructors in their own program as well as others. In Israel, the Jerusalem Circus Organization has created the Jewish Arab Youth Circus Troupe whose mission statement includes the following, "The Jerusalem Circus Association is an organization dedicated to the development of circus arts as a tool for dialogue and coexistence." In South Africa, the Zip Zap circus is a racially integrated youth circus.

So community based youth circus, while teaching circus skills, not only engenders self worth, good work habits and cooperative skills, it can also help youngsters learn to transcend the social divisions that bedevil the worlds they are moving into.

Not all youth circus programs are community based. Ever since Cirque du Soleil gentrified circus performance, the pursuit of circus skills has become more socially acceptable to those who previously had no interest in circus. Soccer moms in this country have embraced circus skills training and become enthusiastic supporters. In the last twenty-five years, middle and upper class youngsters have been studying circus in increasing numbers along with tai kwan do, ballet, gymnastics, music, horseback riding and other skills that will enrich their lives. The circus training occurs in after school programs that have developed around the country, circus residencies that appear as enrichment in schools, often funded by parent groups, and summer camps where circus skills are taught.

A fine example of a successful after school year round circus program is Circus Juventas in St. Paul, Minnesota. Betty and Dan Butler, its founders, are graduates of Sailor

Circus who went on to refine their circus skills at Florida State University. Arriving in St. Paul which, unlike Peru and Sarasota, has no circus past, they set up shop in a community center and soon had thirty students, ages five to eighteen. Few in the community knew what they were doing until, at the end of nine months, they put on a show as part of the community's annual Highland Fest. The response was immediate. Soon the Butlers had 100 students with 350 on the waiting list. Meanwhile they had started working with the Salvation Army and always reserved spots for scholarship students. The Butlers found that what the Twin Cities lacked in experience with circus they made up for in philanthropic energy when they saw a worthwhile cause. Constructing a permanent building that could accommo-

date more students became one. The mayor and other civic leaders became active participants in the venture. Betty Butler described what they were doing in a campaign brochure.

A program for performances by St. Paul's Circus Juventas. Circus Juventas photo.

No child is ever disappointed by "not making the team" or not being allowed to perform. Every child is given the opportunity to grow and challenge themselves, to learn who they are, to develop relationships with adult mentors, with their peers and with the community, and to learn the value of discipline and hard work.

In a framework unusual by today's standards of sports and competitiveness, circus participants bring themselves to new levels of performance.



The St. Louis Arches tumbling troupe is part of the Circus Day Foundation Youth Circus in St. Louis. It also performs professionally with Circus Flora. Circus Day Foundation photo.

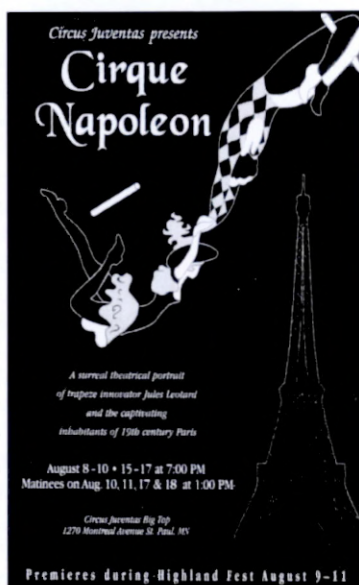
with the understanding that even when trying their hardest, they may fail, drop their juggling balls or miss a trick. "We smile, bow, style and move on."<sup>1</sup>

The building was to be 130 feet long, 90 feet wide and forty-six feet high. Steel trusses set every fifteen feet would extend from one end to the other and support a thick, fire resistant roof. The insulated building was to be air-conditioned.

Budgeted for \$1.6 million, final costs were \$2.1 million when the building was completed. Loans had to be secured. For a time it was touch and go as to whether the loans could be paid, but they were and the facility, and Circus Juventas, have proved huge successes.

The Butlers have developed more flexible rules than those they knew at the Sailor Circus. By permitting their performers to engage in other extracurricular activities, Juventas has a large population of boys who participate in sports.

Circus Juventas uses a large number of community volunteers. Part of the Juventas mission statement is to "use the circus arts as an alternative teaching method and intervention program for youth at risk, serving as a signature cultural attraction which strengthens and integrates the St. Paul community." The winter program culminates in a May show for first year students who then join more experienced students for another show in August. In addition, Juventas operates a full day summer





camp, a half-day camp, and a program for teens that features high wire and flying trapeze and a program for toddlers. I am aware of no other circus school in this country that has achieved success on this scale. There are many after school and weekend circus youth programs here although far fewer than in France which has more than 400 circus schools of various kinds.

There are also a few programs where circus has become a regular part of the school curriculum. The private Waldorf Schools are open to such programs and one of the most successful is the Pine Hill Waldorf School in Wilton, New Hampshire. Jackie Davis, a mime married to a former Ringling clown, was a parent at the school when she was asked to do something with circus arts for the school. This has grown into the annual Hilltop Circus--a very exciting performance. The first one I saw had an act with eight youngsters on unicycles, music by a Dixieland band with Jackie conducting the show from a drum set at the side of the stage. Each show has a theme and specially designed acts support it. Her students developed such skills that Jackie created the Flying Gravity Circus for Hilltop Circus graduates. A number of Hilltop Circus alums moved on to Circus Smirkus and one will be studying at the National Circus School in Montreal in the Fall.

Private schools aren't the only ones where a circus program can flourish. Jerry Burkhalter, the Physical Education Specialist at the 550 student Cascade School in Renton, Washington taught himself to use some unicycles he found in the school's cellar and then taught himself to juggle. He started sharing these skills with students before and after school hours and then integrated them into his Physical Education program.

There is an interesting contrast between the approach of Jackie Davis at her Waldorf School and Jerry Burkhalter at his public school. Waldorf schools have a strong sense of developmental appropriateness--which skills are appropriate at which ages. Jerry's approach is different. He says, "if a first grade student comes in and bangs off five back handsprings, I'll say, Do it again.

Keep doing it, but put some mats down and make it safe.' I've seen so many teachers who'll say to a kid like that, 'Sit down. We don't do those in gym' because they think it's dangerous. It's a matter of giving the kids something. If it wasn't a unicycle, it would be a volley ball or something. If they have the work ethic and the patience and the determination to learn to ride a unicycle, they are good at just about everything they choose to do."<sup>2</sup>

Incidentally, Jerry introduces his first graders to unicycles. A few ride. "A few more do in second grade. Lots in the third grade and lots and lots in the fourth grade."<sup>3</sup>

An increasing number of summer camps offer circus skills training. There are camps that are devoted to circus and camps where circus is one of a number of activities that are offered. Wavy Gravy's Camp Winnarainbow on the Hog Farm Collective in Northern California integrates circus with the counterculture idealism of the sixties and seventies in which Wavy Gravy was deeply involved. As described on the Camp Winnarainbow website: "Campers sleep in teepees, awakening to the sound of a conch shell horn signaling the beginning of camp activities. After breakfast they gather for Wavy's morning reading which might include a passage from Walt Whitman, the Tao Te Ching, Robert Fulgham or something Wavy has authored himself. Singing and exercises follow, then it's off to classes in juggling, mime, trapeze work, magic, African dance, mask making, Native American studies or marital arts."

The Circus Smirkus camp in New Hampshire is another overnight circus camp although its emphasis is more narrowly focused on circus than that of Camp Winnarainbow. There is also a more competitive element--stated or not--as the Smirkus Camp has increasingly become the source of performers who move on to Circus Smirkus. Smirkus has also started a camp for parents and toddlers.

There are many day circus camps.



Performers during a presentation by Vermont's touring youth circus, Circus Smirkus. Circus Smirkus photo.

The Berkshire Circus Camp in Pittsfield, Massachusetts opened in 1994 and serves fifty to fifty-five participants ages 8-13. The two performances that conclude the camp season are accompanied by the local Eagles Band playing from charts inherited from Rev. David Harris' touring youth Circus, Circus Kingdom. Former Ringling clown, Ted Lawrence, who spends the winters doing clown shows in schools as Dr. Quark teaching scientific principles, directs the Van Lodastov Family Circus day camp in Norwich, Vermont. Many of the circus schools around the country, such as Carrie Heller's in Atlanta, Georgia, offer summer camp programs.

The Sports Center at Island Lake in Northern Pennsylvania includes an extensive circus program along with others in team and individual sports, theatre, dance, pioneering, computers and more.

Two touring youth circuses offer young people with developed circus skills opportunities to perform. The Wenatchee Youth Circus in Wenatchee Washington is this year doing its fifty-first tour. The circus was created and is still operated by Paul Pugh, although he is now assisted by others. Like the Peru Amateur Circus and the Sailor Circus, the Wenatchee Circus is a youth version of the traditional American circus with its collection of acts that are unrelated in performance. Pugh, assisted by visiting professional circus performers, taught himself the skills he then passed on to his charges. The circus features high wire and flying trapeze, has never had a tent and performs out of doors. The circus rehearses during the year, so is in a sense a community circus,





The Wenatchee Youth Circus of Wenatchee, Washington has been performing for more than fifty years. Wenatchee Circus photo.

and performs on weekends during the summer.

The operation is quite simple. Pugh and the other trainers are unpaid. The performers contribute gas money. Costumes are built by the performers' mothers. The only paid staff are the truck drivers. Each year's income becomes the basis for the next year's budget. The goal of the circus is to enrich the lives of its performers and its audiences by demonstrating the excitement of the American circus tradition.

Circus Smirkus, based in Vermont's Northeast kingdom, follows the new circus model. Its performances are integrated around themes. The members of the troupe are selected at auditions after preliminary decisions are made from tapes submitted from around the country and from foreign countries. The fifteen part series about Circus Smirkus, *Totally Circus*, that ran on the Disney Channel in 1999 and continues to run on it periodically brought Smirkus to the attention of people far beyond the New England area it tours each year. Even performers from previous years have to audition.

In the early years, Circus Smirkus toured in a much patched, small, green tent. It now tours in a larger, handsome Cannobia tent that can accommodate seven to eight hundred. In those early years, performers reappeared to manage the rig-

ging when their acts were over and the older troupers helped raise the tent. Now there are separate tent and prop crews. Rob Mermin, the founder of Smirkus, acquired his training as a clown in European circuses and came to Vermont to start a circus in which young people would have the experience touring with some adults in a mud show. Former Russian Circus Star, Alla Youdina, left her administrative position in Russian circus to come to this country to work with Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Bailey where she was employed for ten years becoming its Creative director--New Circus Acts and at the same time, she worked with Smirkus becoming its head coach and artistic Director. She continued to work with Smirkus until last year. Youdina brought a number of Russian coaches to work with Smirkus.

Performers, called Smirkos, pay a tuition, which is currently \$3,600. There are some scholarships and this year Smirkus has introduced a program for Smirkus graduates who are paid to perform and work as mentors. Over the years Circus Smirkus has found foundation support to bring young foreign performers to appear in the show.

Until two years ago, Rob Mermin, a brilliant clown, appeared in performances--with the exception of one year when he was co-director of Ringling's Clown College. This year Mermin stepped back from direct participation in the circus and from day to day management. Jeff Jenkins and Julie Greenberg of Chicago's Midnight Circus are Artistic Directors and Troy Wunderle, who heads the off season Smirkus Residency Program is the Creative Director.

After a three week rehearsal, the seven or eight week Smirkus tour plays two days stands with a travel day between in Vermont, Maine and Massachusetts. Considering the high

level of performance, it is not surprising that a number of Smirkos have gone on to professional circus careers--Jade Kindar-Martin on the high wire is currently with Cirque du Soleil, Molly Saudek on the tight wire was featured with Big Apple for a year and for the last few years has been working in Europe, and clowns Molly Pelley now on the Ringling Red unit and Ryan Combs and Josh Shack who will join the next Blue unit.

Now, the big question. Why should there be youth circus? First because it is holistic, mind body training that in its essence is healthy. Second, because it's difficult which means that mastering it gives a real sense of achievement while making clear there are always greater achievements ahead. Third, it is a noncompetitive team activity which helps young people learn to get along with others. Fourth, it is inclusive. Any young person can participate on some level. Fifth, it's fun. Watch the faces of the kids at the Peru Amateur Circus.

At a time when we decry the obesity and the passivity of many young people whose involvement seems to be primarily with the virtual realities of television and computer games, circus skills training sets them in another direction--confronting real challenges. And yes, it does teach valuable life skills. Whether one reaches the professional level of the performers in Circus Smirkus or manages to master basic skills that can be shared with an audience in a circus school or a residency, there is joy and self discovery in circus performance. Finally, at a time when we decry the aging of members of CHS, CFA and CMB, youth circus is creating a new generation of people who love and appreciate circus.

A final thought. Let us hope that the means will be found to extend benefits of circus training to more of our young people especially to the estranged and unhappy who are most in need of it.

#### NOTES

- 1 Circus of the Star: Raising the Big Top. Capital Campaign brochure, 1998, 4.
2. Jerry Burkhalter phone interview. April 13, 2000.
3. *Ibid.*





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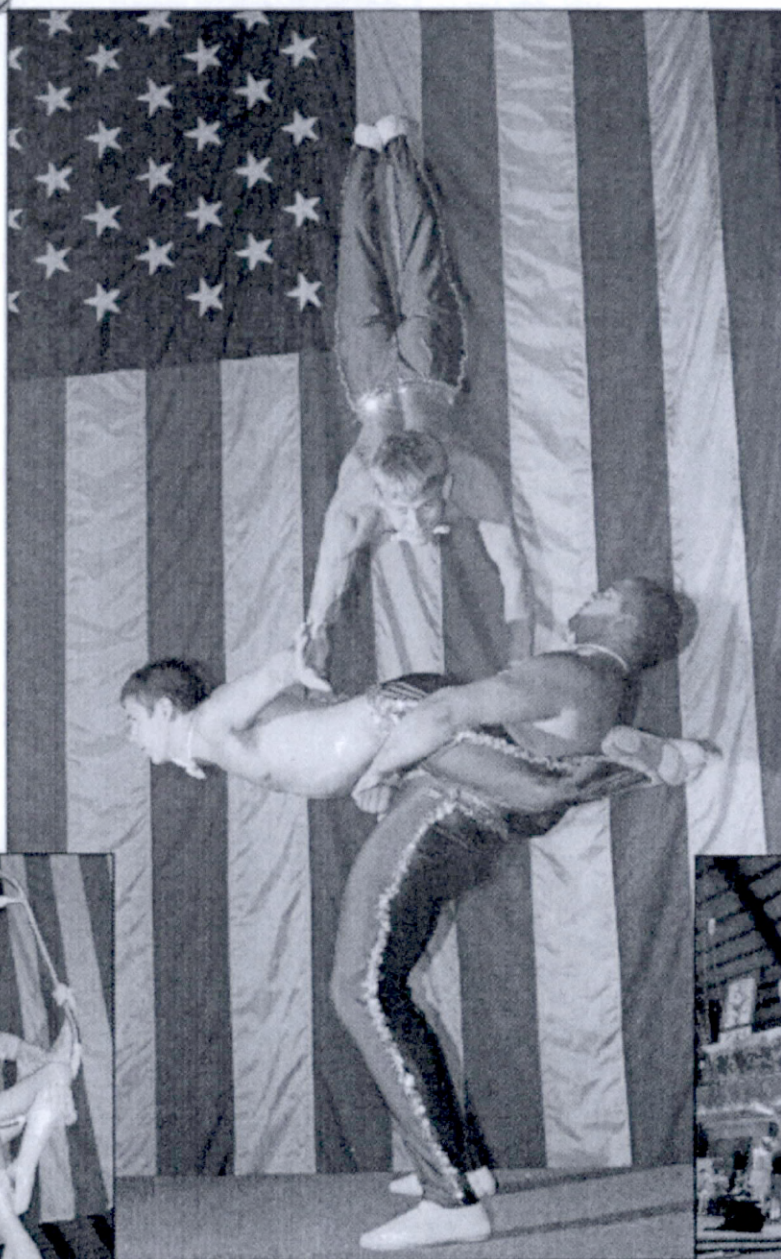
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# Robert H. Brisendine

## 1922-2003

Bob Brisendine died in Atlanta, Georgia on January 5, 2003 at age 80. He belonged to a select group whose original research expanded the body of circus history. Bob was reclusive and in poor health for the last ten years of his life. As a result, his passing went largely unnoticed outside a small circle of family and friends. Nevertheless, his contributions to circus history were significant and worthy of note. His death together with that of Joe Bradbury in August 2002 meant that Atlanta lost its two most senior circus historians within five months of one another.

Robert Harold Brisendine was born on October 2, 1922 in Griffin, Georgia (forty miles south of Atlanta). Early on he developed a keen interest in the circus and was a regular on the lots of his hometown when show day rolled around. 1937 was a banner year for Bob. He caught Hagenbeck-Wallace in Griffin on October 14 (just after his 15th birthday) and a few weeks later went to Atlanta for Ringling-Barnum.

Bob graduated from Griffin High School in 1939. He was only sixteen because Griffin High, like most small Georgia secondary schools of the time, had only eleven grades. He had a mellifluous voice, which he developed by announcing events in his high school's auditorium. He polished his delivery and learned the tricks of the trade by working at Griffin's WKEQ radio station.

He was nineteen when America entered the Great War. He wound up in the Army as an enlisted man and saw combat in northern Italy. His talent at the mike did not go unnoticed, and he was later assigned to Army radio work in Trieste. After the war and back in Atlanta, he went into radio broadcasting full time. Over the years he was an announcer and news manager for several stations in Atlanta. He hosted a highly popular jazz program on Sunday

afternoons. He even broadcasted some minor league baseball games. That came about through his friendship with Ernie Harwell, the voice of the Atlanta Crackers. Harwell went on to become a member of the Baseball Hall of Fame as the legendary radio announcer of the Detroit Tigers.

At the end of 1961 Bob joined the Circus Historical Society and the Circus Fans Association. He promoted local interest in the circus. On a snowy night in Atlanta (January 9, 1962) Bob emceed a circus talk show on his WQXI radio station. He assembled a seven-member panel to answer the call-in questions. They were --

Esma and Arnold Maley--Esma had been a performer on Sells-Floto and later Cole Bros. Arnold was mainly a ticket and front office man. He began with Gentry Bros. in 1926 and thereafter saw duty on such shows as Hagenbeck-Wallace, Cole Bros., and King Bros. in which he was Floyd King's partner. He would go on to serve for many years on the Clyde-Beatty-Cole Bros. show.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Bailey

Thompson—"Uncle Fred," as he was called, had been a press agent working with Gentry, Sparks, Rose Kilian, Barnum & Bailey, and Hagenbeck-Wallace. In fact, he was a survivor of the terrible 1918 Hagenbeck-Wallace train wreck in which he was seriously injured.

Milton "Doc" Bartock and his son David-Doc had been in the medicine show business. Together they were preparing to launch the new Hoxie-Bardex Bros. in partnership with Leonard "Hoxie" Tucker. It debuted later that spring.

Richard Reynolds was the seventh panelist and represented the circus historians and fans.

Bob was always locating folks with circus connections. In 1966 he found former Ringling-Barnum veterinarian Dr. William Y. Higgins working at the Atlanta Zoo. That led to the

Bob Brisendine (2nd from right) on Carson & Barnes Circus in Snellville, Georgia, October 16, 1981. Others are (l to r): Ted Bowman, Charlie Campbell, D. R. Miller and Richard Reynolds. Photo by Phil Moyer.





recording of Doc's circus menagerie memoirs. In 1969 Bob was a prime mover in arranging meetings of Atlanta area fans. Several of them did not know one another until introduced by Bob. This eventuated in the 1970 formation and chartering of the Duggan Bros. Tent of the Circus Fans Association.

Bob even joined out for a time as an advance agent. That was with the Hoxie Bros. Circus in 1976 and 1977. However, it was the thrill of discovery through tedious research that was Bob's real cup of tea. Circus routes and show dates particularly fascinated him. He poured through Georgia newspapers for some forty years until poor health finally stopped him. He compiled volumes of notes. They tell the story of circuses, carnivals, animal exhibits and miscellaneous field shows that played his native state of Georgia.

Among hundreds of discoveries, Bob found the dates when America's first elephant was shown in in 1799. He pinpointed the Savan-

nah, Georgia appearances of the famous midget Gen. Tom Thumb [Charles S. Stratton]. He traced the march of elephant Empress to Atlanta in December 1885 (in sub-freezing temperatures) after she had been purchased at the auction of Col. Giles (Pullman's) World's Fair in Monroe, Georgia. He fleshed out the story of how the Atlanta Zoo was founded in 1889 with animals seized in an attachment of another distressed show, G. W. Hall's Circus and Bingley's English Menagerie. And, he tracked the footprints of Rose Kilian's Circus through South Georgia in 1924. These are but a few examples of the treasures to be found in Bob's volumes of circus notes.

Bob's work was akin to that of the late Orin King of Topeka, Kansas who did the same sort of research on circuses in that state. Unlike Orin, however, Bob never published his findings. His only writing was a nice review of the 1965 King Bros. Circus for *The White Tops*. That notwithstanding, he willingly shared his research with others. Stuart Thayer

relied on Bob's work in his monumental *Annals of the American Circus, 1793-1860* and Joe McKennon published Bob's list of show dates for Columbus, Georgia in his *Pictorial History of the American Carnival*.

His last contribution was to provide Greg Renoff with material for the latter's doctoral dissertation at Brandeis University. It will be published under the title, *A Riot of Ecstasy: The Traveling Circus in Georgia, 1865-1930*. The author has dedicated it to the memory of Bob Brisendine for his contributions to circus history. Meanwhile, Bob left his entire collection, including all his research notes, to the Robert W. Woodruff Library, Special Collections & Archives (Southern History) Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia (Naomi Nelson, Curator). The Brisendine collection is available for study by circus historians.

Richard J. Reynolds, III (With assistance from Fred Dahlinger and Charles Hanson.)

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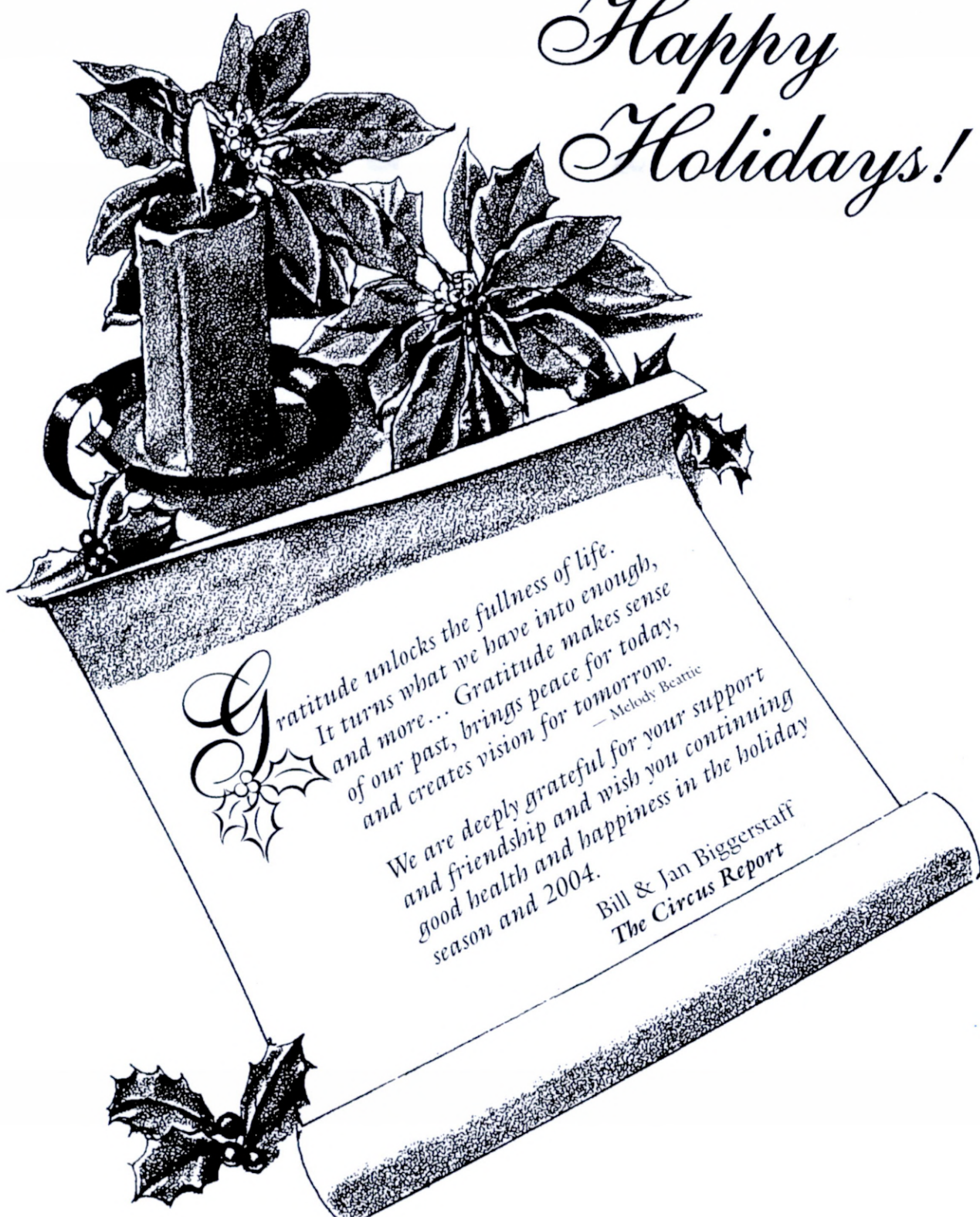
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# Side Lights On The Circus Business

## PART THIRTY-TWO

By David W. Watt

*Editor's note. The dates listed are the days the article appeared in the Janesville, Wisconsin Gazette.*

December 2, 1916

In 1882 we were billed to show Cincinnati for four days, arriving there early Sunday morning and opening Monday afternoon for the engagement. At that time a high-class hall show company was touring the country in a play called "Natural Gas." It was headed by Donnelly and Girard, two high-class comedians and a well-balanced company, and they, too, opened in Cincinnati for a week's engagement on Monday evening. This was at a time that natural gas was being discovered in many parts of the eastern states so that the play which Donnelly and Girard headed was a big drawing card everywhere they went.

If there was anything that you could not sell Adam Forepaugh, it was an undiscovered gold mine or oil well. Donnelly and Girard with their entire company came up to the show in the afternoon, and while the balance of the company stood back, Mr. Donnelly went down to the main entrance of the show and introduced himself to Mr. Forepaugh, saying, "I am Donnelly of Donnelly & Girard, 'The Natural Gas Company.'" All they wanted was admission to the show, but Adam Forepaugh mistook the meaning and immediately told Mr. Donnelly in plain words that circus business was his business and they could not sell him any stock in an oil well at any price. Mrs. Forepaugh, who happened to be at the main entrance, was quick to grasp the meaning of Mr. Donnelly and stepped out and told him that if he would go to the ticket wagon, the ticket agent would fix him out with tickets for his company. Mr. Donnelly told his company the joke, and after they all had

a good laugh over it, he came to the ticket wagon and told me the experience he had just had with Mr. Forepaugh at the main entrance.

I gave him the best reserved seats in the house for himself and his company and ever after that when I met Donnelly and Girard, the best in the house was none too good for me and my friends. When Mr. Forepaugh came out to count up the afternoon house, he told me that a fellow by the name of Donnelly had tried to sell him some stock in a natural gas well, but I never dared to mention the joke to the governor.

Mr. Forepaugh always carried a heavy hickory cane with a big hook on the end which he invariably carried hooked over his left arm, except when he would get a little excited. Then he would grab the cane and make many gestures with it until it became a joke around the show. One day I christened the cane, "The Indicator," for he always pointed it at something when he was talking excitedly on any subject.

John A. Forepaugh, manager of the Forepaugh show. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives.



Finally one day John A. Forepaugh, Mr. Forepaugh's nephew, who was manager of the show, came to the wagon and asked me if everything in the ticket wagon was in good shape. I told him it was, as far as I knew, and asked him his reason for asking me. He said the governor was coming that way and that his old "Indicator" was high in the air "so that you had better have things in good shape when he lands here."

The governor was soon into the ticket wagon and asked me if I valued my position. I told him I had been so busy that I had not checked up lately and didn't know exactly how I did stand. "Well," he said, "you had better check up. You have been giving my boy, Addie, too much money and from this time on I don't want you to give him another dollar. I own this show and I want you to pay attention to what I am telling you."

After giving me this advice, he stepped out of the wagon and soon disappeared. In less than five minutes, the boy was out and as he always called me "Boss," he said: "Boss, I want some money." "There is nothing doing, kid," I said. "I just had orders from your father not to give you another dollar and any money that you get after this will have to be through him."

But the young man could not be misunderstood, and told me in plain words what he would do if I didn't give him money.

"Well, if that is the way you feel about it, I guess I had better give you some," I said. I asked him how much he wanted and he said \$500. I reached down in the safe and handed him a five hundred dollar package and he tipped his hat and said, smiling: "Thank you, Boss," and disappeared.



Less than ten minutes later Mr. Forepaugh was out again and asked me I if I had seen the boy lately. "Yes, very lately," I said. "Less than ten minutes ago." "Did he come after money?" he asked. "Sure, that is the only time he bothers me" I said, "is when he wants money." "Did you give it to him?" I said, "Yes." When he asked me how much and when, I told him five hundred, and he looked at me for half a minute and then said: "Well, Dave, that boy is hard to get rid of when he wants money," and walked away. This was the last time he gave orders to me to give his son money when he wanted it.

A few days ago I passed the old Burr Robbins winter quarters at Spring Brook and I could not help but take a look at the old barn which once served as the animal house during the time that Burr Robbins made Janesville his winter quarters. This old animal barn which sheltered the two elephants, the camels and the cage animals during the winter was not more than 28 x 32 feet and in the half basin the two elephants were quartered, and upstairs all around the sides temporary cages were built to shelter what is called in the business cat animals. When they were well crowded in it, it seemed to serve the purpose as well as a more pretentious building would have done.

As I had visited all the principal winter quarters of the shows in those days and since the greatest winter quarters in the country at that time were Adam Forepaugh's, for it covered two blocks in the city of Philadelphia and was all solid brick and two stories high. In addition to housing all the animals during the winter, it was here that all the cars, cages and tableaux were built during the winter for the coming season and the old ones repaired. This building was built with the view that some day it might be turned into flats which has long since been done. The once famous winter quarters of the Adam Forepaugh show is now a solid block of beautiful flat buildings and possibly but few living there know little or nothing about its past history.

The Barnum show at that time had



The Burr Robbins Circus winter quarters in Janesville, Wisconsin.

winter quarters at Bridgeport, Connecticut, where they still remain and have had much added to them since that time as the show has grown much larger. It is there that the show is put in readiness every winter for the coming season.

Every year sees more improvement in winter quarters of the Ringling show, their last addition being a hotel with modern conveniences built the past summer and will accommodate about sixty people. This hotel is for the show people during the winter and in the spring when the show takes the road, the hotel in Baraboo will be closed until the show comes back next fall.

This is certainly some improvement on the winter quarters of the Burr Robbins show in Janesville more than forty years ago.

One of the most enjoyable events ever held was a dinner and entertainment given a few weeks ago by the Showmen's League of America in honor of their first president Colonel William F. Cody, who stopped off at Chicago for a couple of days en route from Portsmouth, Virginia to Cody, Wyoming. The colonel is honorary life member and was one of those most active in organizing the league. The clubrooms were handsomely decorated with streamers and flags and a large picture of Colonel Cody, around which was draped an American flag, occupying a position back of the officers' table. The members and their guests all wore special cowboy hats and had bandanna handkerchiefs

around their necks, adding a gala air to the festivities.

At 8:30 a committee escorted the colonel over to the clubroom, and as he entered the doors, everyone arose and saluted in military style. To say that Colonel Cody was delighted would be putting it mildly and as soon as President Warren had delivered a short welcoming address and presented the colonel to the members, he gave a talk expressing his appreciation of the meeting in his honor, his belief in the league and its great future and told of his love for everyone and everything connected with the show world.

Following President Warren and Colonel Cody, addresses were made by several of the other members. Between the addresses, excellent entertainment was finished.

Among those who helped make the evening a pleasant one were Marie Burke, songs; Hazel Arnold, songs; Miss Allen, songs; Steve Juhaz, whom our worthy announcer introduced as the "King of Bunkologists." With the assistance of Lew D. Nichols and Charles McCurren, Steve gave an exhibition of skill that mystified all the sharpshooters present and Lew is still wondering how the link of sausage and guinea pig happened to be under his coat.

Bat Nelson told stories and later refereed a fast three-round bout between Solly Bums, a flyweight, and Eddie White who put up a dandy scrap and added a touch of comedy by both running the doughty Bat to cover at the conclusion of their work.

Thomas Rankine, the famous announcer (formerly official announcer for Barnum. & Bailey and during the past season occupying that position with the World at Home shows, also agent while in Canada) introduced the acts in his own inimitable manner.

During the course of the evening the cookhouse ran up the flag and Colonel Cody announced that "chuck was ready." All hands dipped in and the eats, smokes and drinks disappeared like magic. Cody night was a success from every standpoint and before leaving the colonel assured all that he had never had a better time in his life and expressed the hope



that he could attend many more such gatherings.

### December 9, 1916

A few days ago I received an invitation to attend a Christmas dinner and ball to be given by the Outdoor Showmen at the Astor Hotel in New York on December 27. It did not take me long to figure up that I was too light to take a vestibule train and too heavy to go by parcel post. All I could do was to send my regrets for such an entertainment and dinner and wait until the Showmen's League of America give their banquet and ball, which will probably be some time in March in Chicago. Then it will be that the New York boys will wish that they, too, lived in a great city. Up to date the coming entertainment, ball and banquet will be the greatest ever held by outdoor showmen in the country; the organization is growing so fast that possibly from now on these dinners, dances and entertainments will be given yearly in both Chicago and New York.

The following will give you something of an idea of the magnitude with which this will be given: "Letters by the hundreds are pouring into the various committeemen, expressing positive intentions of being in New York for the big event. A meeting of the executive committee was held in the offices of the chairman, Frank P. Spellman, on November 22nd, at which it was then decided that the Hotel Astor be engaged for Wednesday evening, December 27th, for the showmen of the World's Christmas Dinner and Ball. In consequence, Chairman Henry Meyerhoff, assisted by Mr. Spellman and Albert E. Kiralfy, signed contracts the same evening for the colossal grand ballroom of the famous Broadway Hotel De Luxe. This room will comfortably seat two thousand guests at the banquet table and is so constructed as to serve as the most elegant ballroom in the world for dancing, which will be engaged in after the big feed. The dancing feature was especially provided so that showmen could bring with them absolute knowledge that full provision was being made for their entertainment."

Of course, the price per plate had to be arranged so as to amply provide

for the best menu the outdoor showmen have ever eaten, the best dance that the Astor ever held, the best entertainment that ever entertained, and the best and biggest grand surprise that any committee in charge of an affair of this kind, ever presented its guests. The nature of this surprise is going to remain a secret with the executive committee of thirteen, but suffice it so say that it will be such an innovation as to startle the cleverest of outdoor showmen who themselves are kings in the art of surprising their clientele. The price per plate, therefore, to the dinner and ball is five dollars which will include everything, covering tips to the waiters, tips to the checkroom and tips which will provide for the elimination of all other petty annoyances.

The view of the fact that the enterprise is not going to publish a program, it was decided that the seventy-two box seats which skirt the side of and overlook the Astor's Grand Ballroom would be sold to the seventy-two highest bidders among the showmen and manufacturers of paraphernalia which appertains to the outdoor show world. It also was agreed that nothing under a certain amount be accepted as satisfactory for entitling the bidder to a box, this amount to remain a secret for the present.

In view of the fact that the surplus accruing from this dinner and ball is to be divided equally between the

Carnival man Clarence A. Wortham.



Showmen's League of America and the Outdoor Showmen Ward of the American Theatrical Hospital in Chicago, all bidders to these boxes will have a special incentive to demonstrate their benevolence and charity to these two worthy causes. Understand the Showmen's Dinner and Ball in New York is not for one minute a moneymaking proposition. For this purpose, the executive committee has decided that the Showmen's League and the Showmen's Hospital be benefited with the surplus that proceeds from the big New York feed.

According to the custom established several years ago the Showmen's Christmas tree and dinner will be held at the Gunter Hotel in San Antonio, Texas.

In no city of America are the show folks going to have a greater Yuletide celebration than there. This year, as in the past, the festivities will be staged in the huge lobby, the grand ballroom and the dining halls of the Gunter Hotel.

In the South this is the annual event where the showmen and laymen get together to break bread, to discover that the other fellow is quite human, and in this particular instance, the spirit of "Peace on Earth, Good Will to Men" is the leveler of all. Men, women and children irrespective of class, discover the world is not a half bad place after all.

No city of America the size of San Antonio has so cosmopolitan or so representative a colony from the firmament of entertainment as may be found "hibernating" there during those months when the wintry blasts send a chill through the north, east and west of these United States. One by one the frozen noses have been coming to town, for each day now tells of the "Blow-off" of some organization after the year of prosperity. So the lobby of the Gunter is the rendezvous for the early arrivals that impatiently await the coming of the gypsies. Already there have been plans in plenty for the big Christmas celebration, which this year is going to

be an all day affair. All that now is needed is the presence of C. A. Wortham, the "Little Giant," whose for the big company again will mighty caravan soon will be coming



into town, make this place its winter quarters. Percy Tyrrell, manager of the Gunter, and at whose hands the show people in every branch are accorded courtesy and attention, has not yet made public everything that is in contemplation for the Christmas celebration. However, it is a foregone conclusion that the day is going to be ushered in properly with the coming of jovial old Santa Claus to preside at the distribution of the presents and of which there will be hundreds. All children in the hotel and the showfolk are going to be remembered. There will be gifts for many of the orphans, and let it be said in passing many of the showmen dig deep and esteem it a privilege to take part in this worthy and laudable effort to spread cheer and happiness in the holiday season, as all proceeds collected from the peanut sellers, balloon peddlers and sideshows go to the benefit of the orphans.

That work done, the entertainment is going to get under way. Circus and carnival, legitimate and vaudeville, and even the silent drama will contribute to this remarkable bill. There will be no dearth of talent, for Mr. Tyrrell, aside from his great host of friends in the outdoor amusement fields, has been assured the support or whatever he may wish from the theatres. This year there are others not reckoned with in other days the clever men in the army. In the camp of 20,000 regulars and national guardsmen now stationed in San Antonio, there are scores who can do something and do that something well. As the Gunter has been the headquarters for the officers and men in khaki, they have come to the front asking to be accorded the honor of doing their share in this great and unique celebration. As there are now sixteen or seventeen army bands there, it is not unlikely that a huge band of two hundred pieces may supply some of the musical numbers.

There will, of course, be the one-ring circus with its strings of blues, its flocks of joys and its sawdust hoppers and winkers, not to mention the Wortham herd of performing elephants, high school steppers and the yet untamed lion. Also let it be known, there'll be an aerial rigging



The Wortham carnival train. Note steam calliope.

under real canvas, for the ceiling of a part of the lobby is so high that they can hoist 35 foot center poles without disturbing the chandeliers. Just to round out the atmosphere in the inside, there will be an air calliope playing along with the band, just as the millions heard them this year with the Ringling, Hagenbeck, Sells-Floto, Barnes and other shows. "Little Giant" Wortham, also has promised a steam calliope for the out of doors ballyhoo to call the showman and "townner" to his mutual stamping ground.

In short, meet us at San Antonio on Christmas day.

#### December 16, 1916

A few days ago I got into conversation with an old friend and a little later, natural enough for me at least, we drifted into the circus business when my friend said: "Dave, it was along in the late 60's or early 70's that I saw my first circus," and he said, "I want to say right here that that was the greatest of all circuses I have ever seen since. Yet they had but one elephant and possibly a dozen or fifteen cages of animals and at the time it was called one of the big shows of the country. This show was the Great Eastern, and showed in Evansville on Saturday and was billed to show in Whitewater on Monday. It was a wagon show, and in making the trip took what is known as the old Madison road within four miles of Janesville and crossed the river at the four mile bridge and came out on Milton Avenue on the road which now leads to the avenue just north of where the poor farm is now located. The show reached the avenue between nine and ten in the morning and as the news reached Janesville that this would be their route, hundreds of people had gathered along the avenue to await the coming of the great show.

"There were six of us youngsters that had forgotten that we had a home and most of us, barefooted, followed the show to Milton Junction where they spent the balance of the day feeding and watering the stock and put up their cook tent and all hands had dinner. The six of us boys who knew every foot of that country were anxious to tell them all about where to get plenty of water. All the stock with the show, including the one big elephant, were taken to Clear Lake where the elephant took a swim. We six kids were the busiest ones of anyone around the show, for, as we thought everything depended on us as to the location of food and water. It was nearly night before the show pulled out for Whitewater, and before they left, we boys made a contract with them to furnish water for the elephant when the show arrived in Janesville from Whitewater on Tuesday morning.

"At three o'clock Tuesday morning the same six boys met at a given place and walked out near Spalding's Corners before we met the show coming in. We piloted the show into town and when coming down the avenue hundreds of people were along the streets watching for the great show and as we kids were acting as the pilots, we were envied by all the young boys when we came down the street with the show. I recollect well that Emmett McGowan, with a dozen or twenty of his boy friends, met us out on the avenue, and they all yelled out: 'Have you boys joined the show?' We piloted the show onto what had been known for years as the old showground which was on the corner of Center Avenue and West Milwaukee where the Schaller McKey Lumberyard is now located.

"We have already made arrangements for the use of a well which, by the way, was two buckets on a rope, and we immediately took charge of the old elephant and took him to the well where the old sturdy elephant man told us we must give him at least six hundred pails of water. Just how many buckets of water we gave him I do not remember, but it was for nearly two hours that we worked like harvest hands to raise the water from the deep well and the old elephant would swallow a pall of water



in less time than one of us boys could drink a glassful. After all this hard work we took the elephant back to the canvas where the old fellow in charge declared the elephant had not had half enough water and said he had a good mind to send us back again. He then told us that we could go to work and help put up the canvas if we expected to get into the show. This we did, and when the show opened in the afternoon we could not find the man that had promised us admission to the show until it was late in the afternoon. Then he told us that we had not done near enough work to entitle us to admission to the show, but he would give us all tickets and we could come to the show in the evening. We thought we were only too lucky to see such a great show for so little work. From that time on, I have seen all the great circuses that came within any reasonable distance of Milton Junction, which has always been my home. With all the growth and the greatness of the shows today I have never seen one that made the impression on me that the Great Eastern did which was my first circus.

"I have seldom since seen a great show that I could not look around and somewhere in the audience find Attorney E. D. McGowan and his family and friends, so that I figure that although we have both grown gray in the meantime, it was the impression that the Great Eastern show made on both of us that has been so lasting and meant so much to us in later years. Even the great Ringling and Barnum shows with their thirty or more elephants and their greatness in every way have never left the impression on us that our first circus did."

This man is Dennis Hayes who lives at Milton junction and although well on the shady side of life, is still watching every spring for the first announcement of the coming of one of the great circuses.

"I recollect well," he said, "your visit with James A. Bailey, proprietor and manager of the Barnum show last time the show was here when you asked him why he did not retire from the business. He told you that there were many reasons why he did not and one was that it had been his

life work and he wanted to the listening to the band play. Another was that many of his employees had grown old in the business and helped him to make his millions and that he should keep the show running to make a home for them if nothing else. I, like Mr. Bailey, will never get tired of listening to the circus band play their beautiful music and will always try to be there to hear the band play the first tune and the last one."

The other day while conversing with a traveling man, he told me that he had been selling goods on the road for forty-two years. He was a paint and varnish salesman and in all those years, or nearly oil, Janesville, Wisconsin had been on his route.

"But soon after starting in the business," he said, "they sent me as their first representative into the far west." I then told him that in '78 I was with the circus that made many towns in Kansas and Nebraska long before there were any railroads in many of the towns, and when I told him that it was a wagon show owned and managed by Burr Robbins, the old man brightened up and said: "It was in '78 in Davis City, Nebraska, that I saw some of the advertisements of the Burr Robbins show, and knowing that it belonged to Janesville, they looked to me like an old friend, for I had not seen nor heard of anyone from this part of the country for many weeks. Some two weeks later I attended the show but the name of the town in which I saw it had gone from me. But to think that thirty-eight years have elapsed since that time and I am here visiting with the ticket agent of the show which I enjoyed so much at that time in the far west."

"In my trip through Kansas and Nebraska," he continued, "the only place I missed selling paints and varnish was in one town. As the house I was working for kept close tabs on me when I got to the end of my journey, I received a letter from the house with a check for fifty dollars, saying they wanted me to go back and sell

something in that town that I had missed so that I would have a clear score through that country. When I answered the letter, I sent the check back saying that the town I missed only had one frame house in it and perhaps a dozen or fifteen sod houses which, at the time I was there, were too green to be painted or varnished and I would try and sell them on my next trip in the far west. While I didn't meet any old friend that day that I enjoyed your show, it was like meeting an old friend, and it was the first entertainment that I had a chance to enjoy for many weeks. The great railroads in every direction, the fast trains, the telegraph and the telephone have drawn the world so much closer together that today the traveling man has a chance to visit many of the great circuses during the summer. In many of the towns that you and I visited in those days where there were sod houses, today there are six or eight story business blocks with all the modern improvements and more than one which were small villages at that time are great cities today."

The paint and varnish man and I were the first in the field in Kansas and Nebraska close to forty years ago. While at that time the far west bore the name of being wild and woolly, about the same time there were eastern cities that could commence being rough and wild where the boys in the far west would leave off. I think it was in 1877 that the first oil well or at least the successful one, was opened up in Bradford, Pennsylvania. At that time Bradford was a small town lying in a valley with a mountain on either side. Shortly after the first flowing well of oil was struck people of all kinds came to Bradford and in a short time, it was a veritable city. Although there were other oil cities, Bradford was the one place where many of the roughs of the country congregated.

I remember on my first visit to Bradford that after the crowd for the most part had gone into the show, a dozen or fifteen men came up to the wagon and asked for tickets. The leader, as rough a looking customer as you would see in many miles traveling, called for the tickets of a dozen or more men that he had with him,





saying that he was manager of oil well No. 119, and as tough a man as there was in Bradford. I told him I was always glad to meet a man that excelled in his business, whatever it might be, and for a few seconds he looked at me as though he had been insulted. Finally he beckoned to his herd and they all passed on into the show. It was not so many years until conditions changed and the towns were better controlled by police forces. In 1889, the last time that I was there with the show, Bradford was as fine a city and as well regulated as any in the country, but for several years before had saloons running all night and natural gas lit up the city almost as bright as day.

#### December 23, 1916

It was in 1880 that the Burr Robbins show left Janesville for the first time as a railroad show. Mr. Robbins that winter took a partner in the business from down east by the name of E. D. Colvin. This partnership did not prove an agreeable one, and while I did not leave Janesville with the show, it was only a few weeks later that I was telegraphed to come on and take charge of the show, which I did. Mr. Robbins and his eastern partner then both left the show, not to return until an estimate of some kind was arrived at. The show was going west and in a short time we showed in Grand Fork, North Dakota and from there went to Fargo. On our arrival in Fargo early in the morning, I was the first on the lot, awaiting the arrival of the boss canvasman who, by the way, was Tom Fay, a high-class man in the business, but not without his faults. After a long wait, I made up my mind that something had happened to Tom, for he could not be found anywhere around the show. The laying and the raising of the canvas was a job that but few people in the show knew about. Although I was manager of the show, I had no idea how to lay out the canvas and did not know of anyone around the show that did.



James Gibson, the boss property man, who knew everything or at least had always insisted that he did--as he was my only resort, I went to him and told him that Fay was not to be found anywhere, and if it was possible for him to lay out the lot and put up the canvas for him to get, at it as soon as possible.

E. Darwin Colvin, one time partner of Burr Robbins.

"Certainly I can put up the canvas as well as anyone," Jim said. But this I knew well

would be his answer and I had little faith in what he told me. As there was no other man around the show who could possibly do the work, I said nothing and Jim went to work. He had never laid out the canvas before in his life, but had gone at the work like an old timer as he had watched Tom Fay for several years and was finally well on the way. To outsiders, or even old timers with the show, no one knew but what Jim Gibson was experienced at the work. When the canvas was up, Jim came around with a smile on his face and said: "Mr. Watt, the canvas is all up and my nerves are all gone. I never put up a canvas before and all I could do was follow in the wake of the work that I had seen Tom Fay do for years and every minute I was expecting that something would be a mistake." It was along about three o'clock that afternoon when one of the canvasmen came to me and said there was a gentleman out at the stake and chain wagon that wanted to see me. I had no idea who it could be, but thought possibly it was some old timer looking for work. When I got there, it was nobody but Tom Fay with his hat pulled well down over his eyes and he said: "Mr. Watt, I am here to take my medicine. If you discharge me, I'll not say a word, for that is what I have got coming, but if you could overlook this, I will pledge you my word that it will never happen again, and if you want me to, I will go and take the pledge and never take another drink until after the season closes."

"Tom, go right along the same as you have been," I said. "If your word is not good I will not give much for your oath and there are but few people around the show that know of your being away and certainly Burr Robbins is one of them."

As far as I know Tom Fay did not take another drink that season and Burr Robbins, I believe, died without every knowing that James Gibson put up the big canvas in Fargo the day we showed there. At that time, Fargo was one of the few towns where the general admission was one dollar. As we showed to two crowded houses, it was by far the banner day of the season. Today the business is different. With the large shows of today, in case of sickness or the boss canvasman getting injured, there are no less than three or four men that could take his place and lay out the lot as they call it and put up the big shows as well and in as short time as though the head boss canvasman was doing it himself. The shows are so large today and sometimes so late getting into the different towns that they cannot afford to take any chance on any one or two men in an important position like that in case anything should happen.

A short time ago I was visiting with an old timer in the Showmen's League headquarters in Chicago when he told me that he was much interested in the new ticket seller from Wisconsin in 1882 which was my first year in the business with the Adam Forepaugh show when we opened in Washington, D.C. on Thursday, April 6th. This man goes by the name of "Nobby" Clark and is not only one of the old timers in the business, but was given the nickname of "Nobby" for the reason that he was always the best-dressed man around the show.

"Dave," he said, "in the afternoon which was your first selling with the Forepaugh show, there were more than forty of us old timers that felt interested in seeing how you would go to work to handle the thousands of people. We all expected that the man from the Burr Robbins show would make a failure, with the exception of Adam Forepaugh himself, who insisted before the show opened that you had brains enough not to get excited and mix up, for you had seen more or



less of the good sized towns and crowds of the Burr Robbins show. At least the old man insisted that you would make good when the rest of us thought the contrary."

Nobby Clark's hair is as white as snow, but he stands erect and he is as well dressed today as he was more than thirty years ago, and is one of the old school of showmen who still clings to his tall silk hat. He told me that last fall finished his forty-third season in the show business. He has been practically all over the world in that time and is one of the most interesting characters that I have ever met, for Nobby recollects every country that he has traveled in and can recite instances that happened in different countries that never fail to make good listeners of any crowd he happens to be in.

The shows today are better equipped than they were at that time. With the Forepaugh show I had to sell all the tickets, pay all the people and keep the books which was plenty of work for three men, but there seemed to be nobody in the business to think so. Today with the Ringling and the Barnum show on big days there are at least three ticket sellers and two bookkeepers and this divides the work up as it should be and serves the public much better as the big crowds don't have to wait as they did in those days.

A letter from Ed Shipp of the Shipp & Feltus show which is traveling in far off countries gives an interesting account of their travels and their business. Ed Shipp and his wife who, by the way, was Julia Lowande, bareback rider, are both old friends of mine and we traveled together several years with the Forepaugh show.

The Shipp & Feltus show up to November 2 at Valparaiso, South Chile, had been out just nine months. During that time, the show played Costa Rica, Panama, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia and north and central Chile. The reception given the aggregation all along the route has been far above the expectations of the management and is really flattering.



Capt. Jack Bonavita, Bostock's trainer.

The show will play the entire month of December in Santiago. January and February they will show in the smaller towns of south Chile, after which they will cross the Andes mountains into the Argentine Republic where the management plans to play for a solid year.

The company has recently added four musicians to the band who went there direct from the United States.

In the letter from Messrs. Shipp and Feltus they say that their stand in south Chile so far has been the most successful one of the entire route. It is the beginning of spring there and corresponds with the month of May in the United States.

"Colonel Wm. F. Cody (Buffalo Bill) was the guest of honor at a meeting and banquet of the Wyoming Game Protective Association held in the Irma Hotel, Cody City, Wyoming,

Saturday night, November 25th, immediately after his return from the 101 Ranch show. He stopped over in Denver on his way. Upon request he delivered a speech in his inim-

This Shipp and Feltus letterhead is green with the title in red.



ity able style, talking of the good he thought the association was going to do for wild game, etc.

Despite his wearisome travels, the Colonel says he feels younger than ever. He is now planning to build an annex to the Irma Hotel so as to take care of the tourists that promise to visit Cody next year.

#### December 30, 1916

Not long ago an old friend of mine was discussing with me the trained wild animal show as it has been made famous by such men as the late Frank C. Bostock and Carl Hagenbeck and asked me if I did not think the animal show as an amusement enterprise was a thing of the past. My answer to him, and I repeat the statement here, was that so long as we have succeeding generations of amusement lovers, just that long will there always be new audiences for the big sensational acts which always are the features of these enterprises.

In connection with a wild animal show, there is always an element of danger that appeals to one class. There is an element of the spectacular such as Bonavita's group of twenty-eight lions, which long was a feature of the Bostock show which contains a majesty that appeals to another element. Then, too, there always are lovers of animals for whom all forms of animal life have a never-ending charm. It is upon the latter class that I base my judgment chiefly when I say that just that so long as there are animal lovers in the world, just that long will properly conducted animals shows make the successes in the future that they have in the past.

As in every other branch of amusement endeavor, there must be showmanship, combined with an aggregation of beasts of the forest and jungles to make the enterprise stand out in contradistinction to a mere zoological collection. The great zoos of the country attract their thousands and tens of thousands of people annual-



ly. Go to the Bronx Park Zoological Gardens on any pleasant day and you will find it thronged with people of all classes. They are animal lovers every one of them and take great enjoyment in watching the antics of the monkeys, the rough and tumble playfulness of the bears and the ponderous parading of the elephants. This collection is one that could not be surpassed for variety, yet in no sense of the word could it be termed an animal show. For at an animal show the public demands action and novelty. Then they revel in the human element as represented by the trainer and take keen delight in the final subjugation of the wild beasts by the sheer willpower of the man or woman in the arena. As you know, every animal act must end in this manner or in a tragedy.

Mr. Bostock had a marvelous collection of animals, but he had gathered them from the viewpoint of a showman rather than as a "faunal naturalist." His wonderful group of lions was selected with great care as to their temperament and ability to work together in an arena without turning the place into a Roman amphitheatre of the days when beasts were matched against beasts for the mere purpose of seeing how much of each other's blood they could spill.

The various other groups which made up the features of the Bostock show, while they were all of the finest specimens available, likewise were chosen from the viewpoint of presenting a spectacle that would give pleasure to the thousands of patrons. Occasionally Mr. Bostock would find that in the particularly handsome specimen, he had brought an obstreperous beast that could not be subjugated, and this fellow promptly would be placed in a den for exhibition purposes only, for unless an animal proved sufficiently docile for a trainer to handle, there was always danger that he would give the audience an act that was not down on the bills.

I have met a large number of animal trainers handling various kinds of beasts and have found them to be modest, courageous and hardworking men and women. Sometimes I



The Bostock animal arena show front.

have thought that they must have a large amount of what we might call psychological bravery as well as utter fearlessness of physical harm. By this I mean that they stand a nerve strain that would drive the average man to drink or distraction, for at every big animal show, when it is settled for a long run, there always are a certain number of ghoulish bugs who get the idea that sooner or later some Particular animal in a group is going to kill his or her trainer. Once they get this idea it seems to be an obsession with them, and night after night they will be the first ones into the show when the doors are opened and make a rush for the front seats where they will have an unobstructed view when the blood begins to fly.

Often I have seen a line of these fellows, show after show, glaring vindictively at some trainer and looking as though every time he escaped without an accident that he had cheated them out of something that was their just due or had put his hand in their pocket and stolen their valuables. There is no particular way of describing these people except as a type not found anywhere save at an animal show. They seem to come from all walks of life and to have no particular business--or if they have, they give up their business during the engagement of the show so as not to miss the big moment for which they are inwardly praying.

It takes a lot of nerve for a trainer to face a group like this day after day and night after night. I sometimes think that were I the man in the arena and saw this flock of buzzards waiting for my body to fall, I would forget the animals for the time being

and turn my whip and gun to other uses until I had a certain part of the audience leaving the building on the run.

It is a strange fact that very few of the trainers escape serious injuries and that very few of them die a natural death, and as long as we have people sufficiently brave to risk their lives in this form of amusement we will find a public responsive to the subtle appeal of the wild animal shows.

As I have been asked to make a few remarks regarding the value of animals acts in vaudeville, I wish to say distinctly that the value of the animal act in vaudeville is the same as the value of the act presented by a human being. It depends entirely upon its novelty. Several years ago when Mr. Bostock sent to this country "Consul the Great" the first educated chimpanzee to be exhibited on the American stage, the act commanded a salary of \$1,000 per week and was a sensation wherever exhibited throughout the United States. The following year the same act received \$800 because the novelty was worn off a bit and the salary of educated chimpanzees steadily has decreased because the novelty no longer exists.

The same condition holds good in any other animal line. If the act is a novelty, it commands the price. As the novelty wears off, it merely becomes an animal act of a certain class. While there always are people in every vaudeville audience who think more of animal acts than they do of the human beings, still, the animal, lacking the personality of the human artist, cannot command the price when the novelty is gone.

If in the year just drawing to a close you have been entertained by the reading in the articles of the Sidelights, their I feel as though I have accomplished something. In this, the last article of 1916, I will close by wishing all the readers a Happy New Year. In the future I will try and give you the latest happenings in the circus world and keep you posted where the big shows are going and the features as nearly as possible for 1917.



January 6, 1917

Playing the weekend at the Apollo this week is the son of an old friend of mine by the name of Robert Stickney, Jr. and his wife. He is the only son of Robert Stickney, Sr., who



Joise DeMott, lady rider.

in the eighties with the Forepaugh show was the principal rider and known from coast to coast as one of the highest class in his business for many years. Robert Stickney, Jr.'s mother was the only daughter of the late John Robinson of Cincinnati who was famous in circus business for more than half a century. Mrs. Stickney, Jr. was Louise De Mott, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James De Mott who, in the middle seventies, were the principal riders with the Burr Robbins show for two or three seasons. James De Mott, the father, died some years ago, but the mother is still living in a comfortable home in Philadelphia. Josie De Mott, the other sister, is a famous rider and some seven or eight years ago was the principal rider with the Barnum show when they visited Janesville for the last time under the management of James A. Bailey. Both families, the Stickneys and the De Motts, have stood both in the business and out of it for the highest quality and have always been a credit to any show they might be connected with.

It was three years ago with the Hagenbeck-Wallace show that Mr. and Mrs. Stickney appeared here, Mr. Stickney as the principal rider, and his wife handling their snow-white high school horse hitched to the harness. This act was one of the features of the show that season.

Robert Stickney, Sr. is still in the business, but when at home has his ring barn and permanent address in Cincinnati, Ohio which place he has claimed as his home for more than forty years.

It was in '87 with the Adam Forepaugh show that Robert, Jr. came on to spend his vacation, for at that time he was in college. I remember well his father introducing me to him and in the presence of the young man said that "Bobby" was going to be a civil engineer. But when young Robert had graduated and was ready to start into business for himself the circus business seemed to be born in him and nothing seemed to appeal to him but the canvas and sawdust. Although at the time the father was disappointed at the sudden turn, he soon made up his mind that it was no use to object and gave him his own way. It would seem that perhaps he took the right road, for he has certainly made a success in the business, and there is no one of the big shows in the country who would not be glad to have his services and always consider his act a credit to the show.

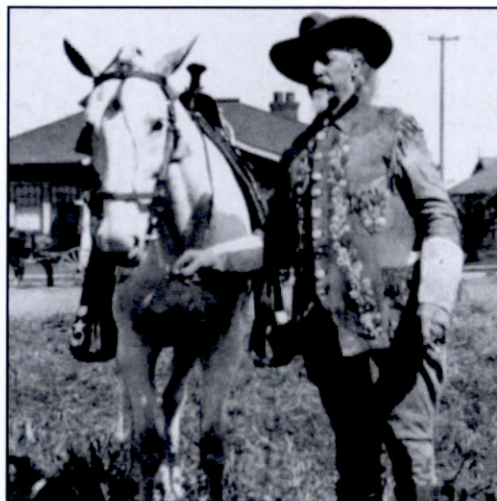
The Stickneys close their engagement here Sunday night and go to Chicago where they open next week. Janesville people will always be glad to welcome back the Stickneys at any future time.

Colonel Cody (Buffalo Bill), who has been seriously ill at the home of his sister in Denver, has sufficiently recovered to be removed to Glenwood Springs, Col., where his physician has great hopes of his final recovery. The Grand Old Scout insists that he will be as good as new and ready to open with the show early in the spring, and his world of friends hope

that this may prove true.

At the winter quarters of the Ringling show in Baraboo the first community Christmas tree ever held in that city was given this year. To show you that the average circus people enter into the holiday spirit of the Christmas tree, the *Baraboo Daily News* gives us the following interesting letter of the way they celebrated Christmas this year: "Several of the heads of departments with the Ringling show were tireless workers, including F. G. Warrell, manager; John R. Agee, equestrian director; Charles Rooney, boss hostler; Frank Terbilcox and many others of the Ringling force, in helping so much to make the first community Christmas tree of Baraboo a success. It is fair to say that Baraboo never celebrated a Christmas with the pomp and glitter that it did this year. In addition to the musical numbers, Frank Terbilcox gave several selections on the Ringling Bros. air calliope while Mr. Brewster enlivened the scene with the searchlight from the roof of the Al Ringling theatre. The happiest period of the evening for the children, however, was when Santa Claus appeared. He was none other than judge Adolph Andro sitting in the rear seat of a circus tableau vehicle drawn by six finely decorated ponies. Some of the little ones were agreeably surprised when Santa called them by name as ponies and sleigh dashed through the courthouse park. The whole idea was conceived and directed by F. J. Warrell who had the project in mind since a year ago. He

William F. Cody in his last years.







John Agee, Ringling Bros. equestrian director.

determined then that Baraboo is big and citified enough to give the people a treat equal to the big cities. The event showed that he was right. He succeeded in getting persons on all committees who proved able lieutenants. The circus boys were enthusiastic over the work and the way they brought in the tree and put it up looked like putting up the big top for show day. The tree was cut and brought to the courthouse yard by Charles Rooney and his men. Frank Terbilcox played the large electric calliope, and John Agee made the beautiful electrically lighted star and placed it at the top of the tree.

A Christmas tree was also held at the Trinity Church in Baraboo. A splendid program was presented and the jingle of sleigh bells in the backyard announced the arrival of Santa. This Santa was John R. Agee in private life, and he came in and unloaded a large pack, shook hands with a few of the little folk, spoke words of parental advice and then departed to fill his many other appointments for the evening.

The fourteen prisoners at the county jail at Baraboo did not see Santa Claus come down the chimney, for Santa never goes where bad people are. Sheriff Hale provided an extra dinner, however, and the menu of chicken and other good things not usually served was enjoyed. During the day Joe Miller, who is connected with the Ringling show, sent gifts to those in the bastille. This has become a custom with Mr. Miller, and although it is not likely that any of the prisoners are in the jail on two successive Christmases, the prisoners seem to know that they will be remembered by him and peer through the bars for his approach.

Mrs. Al Ringling has made a quit claim deed, transferring her interest in the brownstone mansion and the Al Ringling theater to the four remaining Ringling brothers, Alfred T., Charles, John and Henry. According to the will of Mr. Ringling, Mrs. Ringling was to have the use of the brownstone house and the furniture



Fred G. Warrell, manager of the Ringling show.

as long as she lived, provided she did not marry, after which the property was to revert to the only sister of the Ringlings, Mrs. Harry North. By the making of the quit claim deed, the interest of Mrs. North in the property is not affected. By the provisions of the will, Mrs. Ringling was to have the income from the theater during her lifetime, after which the property was to pass to the four brothers. By the quit claim deed, she has turned over her interest in the property. Since the death of Mrs. Ringling the theater has been under the control of the four brothers according to the will.

## Season's Greetings

From The Rawls  
Family, David, Harry  
and Mary.







My association with the  
*Bandwagon* started in 1961.

Since then 253 issues of the  
magazine have come out of  
my basement.

**Happy Holidays**

**Fred D. Pfening, Jr.**



Researching circus history and  
cigars in Havana, Cuba October  
2003.



# BANDWAGON

## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

Vol. 47, No. 6 NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2003

**FRED D. PFENING, JR. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER**

**Fred D. Pfening III, Managing Editor**

Bandwagon, The Journal of the Circus Historical Society, Inc. (USPS 406-390) (ISSN 0005-4968), is published bi-monthly by the Circus Historical Society, Inc., 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212-2691. Periodicals Postage Paid at Columbus, OH. Postmaster: Send address changes to Bandwagon, 1075 West Fifth Ave., Columbus, OH 43212-2691.

Editorial, advertising and circulation office is located at 2515 Dorset Rd., Columbus, OH 43221. Phone (614) 294-5361. Advertising rates are: Full page \$100, half page \$60, quarter page \$35. Minimum ad \$25.

Bandwagon, new membership and subscription rate: \$34.00 per year in the United States; \$39.00 per year outside United States. Single copies \$4.00 plus \$2 postage. Please direct all concerns regarding address changes and lack of delivery to the editor.

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### THE FRONT COVER

eBay, the internet auction website which modestly calls itself the "World's Online Marketplace," has revolutionized commerce in circus and wild west show memorabilia. It has significantly raised the price of many genres of circusiana including lithographs, letterheads and trade cards, and lowered it on others such as Ringling-Barnum programs and route books, and most circus-related books. It has created for the first time a smart market for field show collectibles, one in which both buyer and seller have an approximate idea of the value of an item. The day of the savvy collector obtaining a rare piece at a bargain price from an unknowledgeable seller is virtually (no pun intended) over.

It has also led to the listing thousands of reproductions, mostly posters, many of which are sold as originals. The copies of real lithographs sold by the Circus World Museum in the 1960s are a fixture on eBay, and are often sold as genuine. The fake letterheads created by Roland Butler in the mid- 1950s appear often and are usually purported to be authentic.

A number of exceptional items have been sold on eBay. In recent years an 1884 Yankee Robinson and Ringling Bros. herald, an Isaac Van Amburgh letter, a group of Batchellor and Doris posters, and an 1842 menagerie ledger have all been auctioned online. The most extraordinary piece to appear on eBay occurred last year when an Indianapolis antique dealer listed the one sheet on this month's cover. This 1883 Jumbo lithograph, unknown before its eBay debut, was acquired by Howard Tibbals for the most ever paid for a single piece of circus ephemera. While posters previously unknown to the collecting fraternity surface occasionally, this is the first new Jumbo bill to come to light in over forty years. The *Bandwagon* staff thanks Mr. Tibbals for sharing this astonishing image with the Circus Historical Society.

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